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ABSTRACT

In 1989 the Education Ministers of the European Community passed a resolution to combat school failure. This document was prepared by EURYDICE, the information network formed by the Council on European Communities and the Ministers of Education. The document describes the overall situation in which school failure arises in the various education systems in the European Community (EC). The introduction describes the major consequence of failure at school--social exclusion. Part 1 describes the persistence and seriousness of failure at school and discusses assessment procedures used in the education systems of the EC member states. Part 2 provides an overview of the research and theories on causes of educational failure. Part 3 describes actions taken in response to failure at school, including specific measures implemented in the Member States of the European Community. Information sheets describing the education systems of the 12 member states, 7 tables, and 3 graphs are included. Appendices contain a copy of the 1989 resolution and articles 126 and 127 of the Treaty of Maastricht. (LMI)

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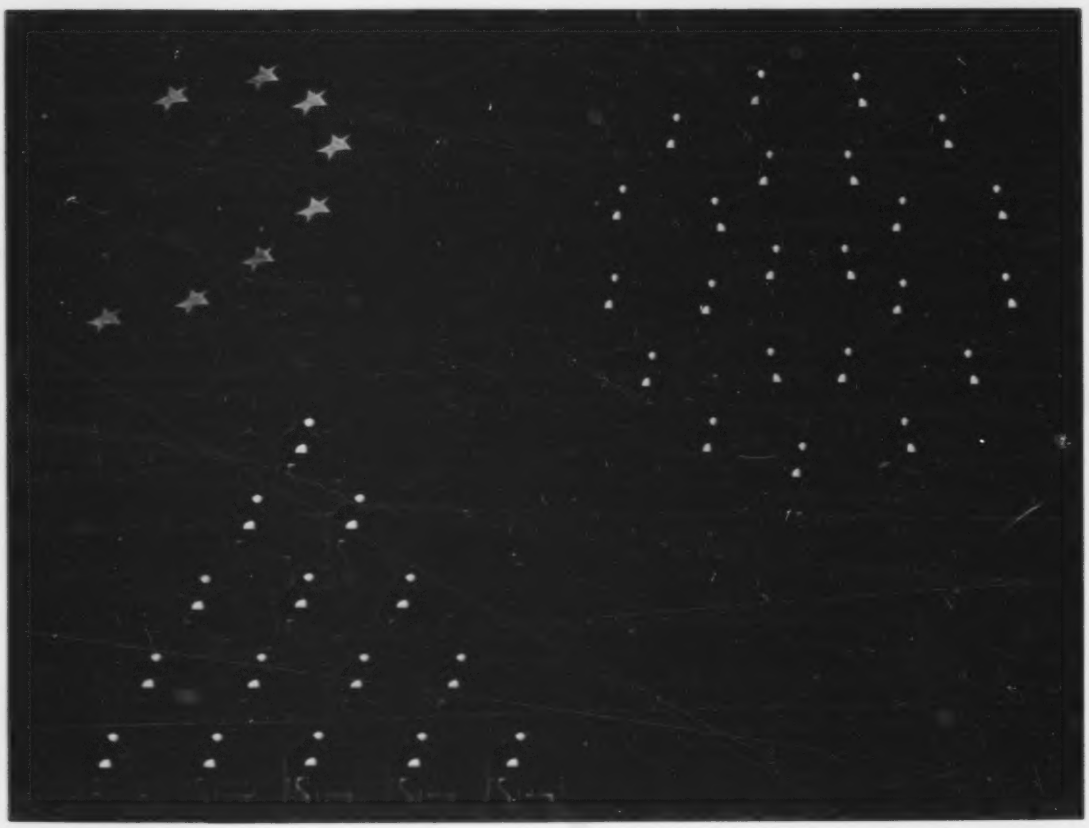
MEASURES TO COMBAT FAILURE AT SCHOOL: A CHALLENGE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE



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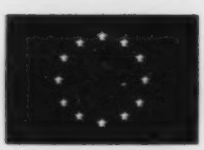
The Education Information Network
in the European Community

MEASURES TO COMBAT FAILURE AT SCHOOL: A CHALLENGE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE



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FOREWORD

Young people constitute one of the prime assets of modern society. They are the agents of future change. At a moment in time when the face of the European Community is changing, it is perhaps not inappropriate to recall how invaluable and essential young people are to European construction and especially to its social and democratic dynamic.

The present situation does however give rise to some serious questions. Societies are being profoundly shaken by a variety of changes which affect in particular their social cohesion. These changes also affect the right to education established by all Member States - a right which is being seriously eroded for an increasing number of young people who are failing at school.

In passing their 1989 Resolution on combating school failure, the Education Ministers of the European Community recognised the existence of a major common problem. The Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth of the Commission of the European Communities, which realised the importance of exchanging information and experience on this subject, encouraged the organisation of a meeting of Senior Education Officials, under the Portuguese Presidency in 1992, on combating school failure. By way of preparation for that meeting, a working paper was prepared by EURYDICE on Member States' efforts to combat school failure.

This provided the basis for the present document, which has been prepared by the EURYDICE European Unit with the full cooperation of the National Units of the network in checking the national data used. In order to contribute to understanding of the full connotation of the term, the document describes the overall situation in which school failure arises in the various education systems in the European Community. It also provides an overview of the research work and theories which have attempted to explain the causes of this phenomenon. In presenting a limited selection of the specialist literature dealing with school failure and highlighting some research findings - both essential elements in the process of discussion and decision-making in education - the European Unit wished to improve EURYDICE's performance of its information role. Specific measures implemented in the Member States of the European Community are also described. Selection of the strategies presented here is largely influenced by their current importance in policy debates.

I should like to thank in particular Arlette Delhaxhe, Deputy Director of the EURYDICE European Unit and head of its Studies and Analyses Department, for her key role in the coordination and production of this study. I must also thank all the National Units in the network who checked the data for relevance and accuracy, thus contributing to the production of a document of quality.

This latest publication of the EURYDICE network on a topic of general interest to the Member States of the European Community is intended as an additional contribution to Community cooperation in education and to greater mutual understanding.

Luce Pépin
Director
EURYDICE European Unit

December 1993

INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL EXCLUSION, FAILURE AT SCHOOL: THE STAKES FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Since the extension of universal compulsory education, failure at school which initially was an educational phenomenon without any real social consequences is increasingly perceived as a major social problem. Those young people who are excluded from participation in society have in fact most frequently been victims of failure at school at some time or other in the course of their education. "More than ever, failure at school begets social failure, which means a life of uncertainty, marginalisation and dependence on the structures of social assistance"[1].

As the level of education is a factor of the utmost importance to economic, social and political integration, we must ensure that the mechanisms which give rise to exclusion among young people are eliminated and that everyone receives a minimum level of training. It is therefore necessary to reassert the individual's right to education. This right to education implies the right of everyone to receive the basic knowledge and training required to enable him to find employment and to play a full part in society. It is therefore a powerful means of social integration when properly implemented.

A. SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Although it is part of the one fifth of the world's population which shares over 80% of the world's income, the European Community nevertheless contains 53 million people out of a total population of 340 million who are excluded from the benefits of this prosperity. Although the Member States devote between 22 and 23% of their national income to their social security budgets, the number of those excluded continues to increase, rising from 38 million in 1975 to 53 million in 1992. This means that just over 15% of the population of Europe has become economically and socially marginalised, and among these marginalised groups, there is a significant proportion of young people. True political democracy cannot fully develop if it is not accompanied by economic and social democracy.

Social exclusion, which is both a process and the result of it, is producing a two-tier society. Exclusion has introduced an increasing division between those who are privileged and in relative security, that is to say those who have a job and enjoy a comfortable standard of living, and those who are disadvantaged and marginalised, who have no access to employment, who suffer from financial insecurity and isolation and who play no part in society. This situation calls in question the social contract on which modern Western societies are built, since they can no longer ensure that those on the fringes of their population enjoy the protection and the economic and social well-being to which they are entitled, the benefit of the "accelerated raising of the standard of living"[2].

Social exclusion thus calls into question the social cohesion which binds society together. As society disintegrates, we find emerging a category of persons, groups, even areas, which are excluded from participation in the exchanges and practices of social integration, and deprived of the typical rights associated with it. The conditions conducive to real participation in social life are not fulfilled, with the result that citizens are unable to exercise their rights.

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1 Bernard CHARLOT, "Penser l'échec comme événement, penser l'immigration comme histoire"(Consider failure as an event, consider immigration as history) in Migrants-Formation, No 81, p. 14, june 1990.

2 Article 2 of the Treaty of Rome : "The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of the Member States, to promote (...) an accelerated raising of the standard of living (...)".

The mechanisms which give rise to social exclusion are complex. Economics plays a crucial role. However, from the individual's point of view, the level of training reached is an important factor, reflecting directly on the right to education of all citizens.

This right is of even greater importance as the European context in which it is set undergoes major cultural, social, political, technological and economic changes. While not intending to be exhaustive, it is important to analyse even briefly the changes which most directly affect skills needs, which will lead to a better understanding of expectations as regards the right to education and their implications for social exclusion.

B. CHANGES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The global nature and the competitiveness of the economy

Contemporary society is currently undergoing profound economic and technological changes. The economic climate has evolved greatly under the influence of fundamental changes in the means and end-results of production and in the content of productive activity.[3] Accelerated technological changes affect business from the point of view of management, production and marketing. Some sectors have declined, in particular heavy industry and the extraction of natural resources, whereas others, such as services, are constantly expanding.

Furthermore, the economy is becoming increasingly cosmopolitan in nature and this concerns not only the exchange of goods and services (internationalisation), and capital transfers (multinationalisation), but also all the stages in the design, development, production, distribution and consumption of goods. World-wide competition underlines the logic of competitiveness between countries and legitimises the technological, industrial and economic struggle between undertakings, economic operators, cities and States.

In this new era, is the role of the State as the guarantor of the general public interest not in danger of becoming completely subservient to the competitive requirements of business[4]? Is there not a major risk of justifying the exclusion of individuals, social groups or areas by exaggerating the principle of the survival of the fittest and resulting in a weakening of democracy?

In this competitive situation, the strategy of undertakings attempting to preserve their position in rapidly changing world markets is to make greater use of flexibility of employment and human resources. The use of casual labour is becoming common (part-time, limited duration and temporary contracts). Casual work accounts for more than 15% of employment in Greece and Portugal and up to 30% in Spain[5].

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3 OCDE, Intergovernmental Conference on education and the economy in a changing society, Paris, March 1988.

4 Charles LEVINSON, "L'Etat-nation, bien qu'il continue à régner, ne semble plus gouverner" (The nation state, although it continues to reign, no longer appears to govern), L'inflation mondiale et les firmes multinationales (World inflation and multinationals), Le Seuil, Paris, 1974.

5 Eurostat, January 1992.

Furthermore this line of reasoning requires an ever more highly qualified labour force which is capable of adapting to rapid changes in technology and of constantly updating its skills and knowledge. This primarily concerns investment in the education and training of citizens. In an open economy of this type, the competitiveness of the working population is closely linked to its possibilities of acquiring appropriate theoretical and practical knowledge.

Structural disruption of the labour market and the marginalisation of young people

The triumphalism of the years of growth and expansion has been followed by an economically difficult period marked by a series of disruptions and stagnation in production, a levelling-off in the rise in job creation, and above all by a high level of unemployment, in particular long-term unemployment. The dramatic persistence of unemployment is the principal cause of exclusion. By excluding individuals from the labour market, unemployment results in the loss of many other forms of participation in society. Employment, apart from the income it guarantees, is usually the principal means of social integration.

Unemployment rates between September 1992 and September 1993 increased by 11% in the EC as a whole, rising from 9.5% to 10.6% of the working population[6]. Spain and Ireland, with 21% and 18% respectively, have the highest unemployment rates in the EC whereas, at the other extreme, Luxembourg has an unemployment rate of only 2.8% (Graph 1a). Even more alarming still is the fact that, of the thirteen million unemployed in the EC, over half are long-term unemployed who have been waiting for more than a year to find a job; a third have been unemployed for more than two years.

In addition, structural difficulties in the labour market affect women and young people in particular. "More than others, young people looking for their first job appear to suffer from the economic slow-down"[7]. Almost a fifth of young Europeans under 25 years of age are unemployed (Graph 1b). In France, the unemployment rate for the under-25s is 23% (1993) as against 11% for the working population as a whole. In most countries, unemployment affects young people twice as much as the total working population. In Italy this is even more pronounced, unemployment being three times as high among young people (Graph 1b).

It is becoming increasingly evident that those who have not received adequate preparation, or who have not had educational opportunities, or whose qualifications are inadequate, are increasingly in danger of being marginalised, excluded from the labour market or reduced to filling casual and badly paid jobs (job placements, temporary or seasonal contracts). In the OECD countries, young people aged between 20 and 24 who have received higher education or training are three to four times less likely to be unemployed than those who have only basic training[8].

Unqualified young people are the first victims of the operation of the labour market. In so far as "diplomas awarded on the completion of levels of education and the acquisition of skills are increasingly used on the labour market as indicators of qualifications, they are more likely to be used as instruments of selection for access to employment..."[9]. The current trend of raising the levels required of applicants for available employment, and therefore deskilling

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6 Eurostat, October 1993.

7 INSEE, (French) National Statistics and Economic Studies Institute, Economic Notes, February 1991, p. 10.

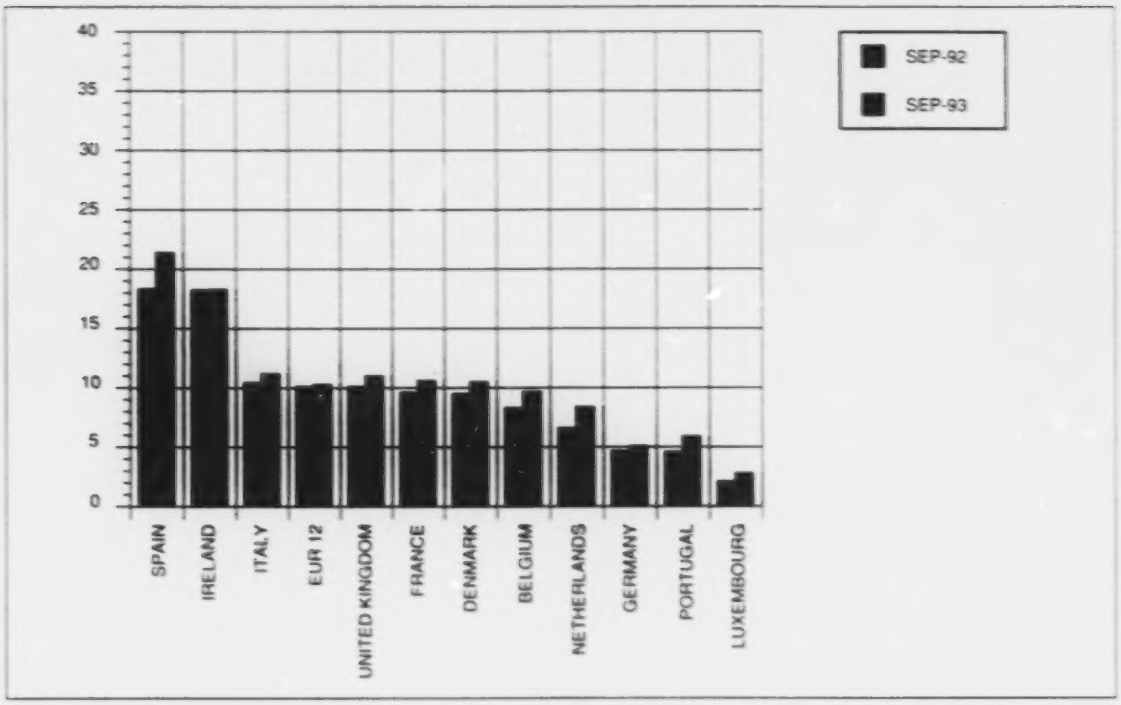
8 OECD, "Employment Outlook", Paris, July 1989.

9 Intergovernmental Conference on Education and the economy in a changing society, Paris, 1988, p. 6.

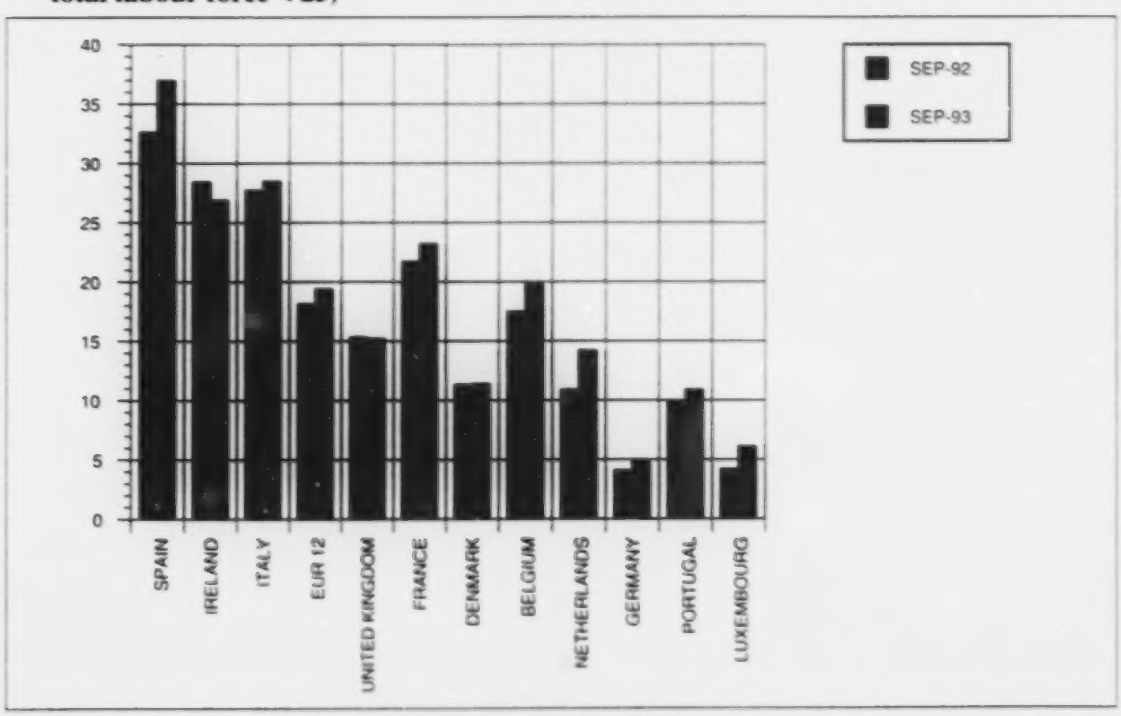
▶ **GRAPH 1:**

Unemployment in the twelve Member States of the European Community

a) Total unemployment (as a percentage of the total labour force)



b) Unemployment rates of young people under 25 years of age (as a percentage of the total labour force < 25)



diplomas, results in an applicant who has either experience, or a diploma attesting to his vocational skills, being selected for the job on offer. These selection processes result in the ruthless exclusion of young people who are ill- or largely un-qualified.

The phenomenon of social exclusion hits these young people hardest since the inability to break into the labour market and, through employment, to become integrated into society in all its forms and to enjoy the associated civic rights, deprives them not only of a future but, even worse, deprives their life of meaning. "The young person who drifts is not only someone who is unemployed, but a person who is destroying himself because the world in which he lives is in the process of destroying itself[10]". The recent outbreaks of violence in the suburbs of European cities are an illustration of this. They are "a veritable warning signal"[11] to present-day society. They require a response to be given to these young people affected by unemployment, insecurity and exclusion, because a society which has nothing to offer young people is not a viable society. Europe more than ever needs its youth, for the sake of its future, for the flowering of its democracy, for its social well-being and for its economic prosperity. If Europe does not pull itself together, its social and economic cohesion is in danger of being seriously jeopardised.

C. COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

For the last fifteen years, the Community, has within the limits of its powers, conducted a series of actions, debates and studies on the phenomenon of social exclusion and the mechanisms which produce it, such as poverty, illiteracy and failure at school.

It has introduced special measures aimed at promoting exchanges of experience and identifying the most appropriate methods already in use in the Member States.

Tackling social exclusion

The Community uses the Structural Funds as the main instruments to combat exclusion, the primary objective being to reduce inequalities of economic development between the regions. Special programmes such as "Horizon", "NOW", and "Euroform" aimed at the most deprived populations and particularly disadvantaged urban areas have been introduced since 1990. "Poverty III" (1989/94), the third European Community programme concerning the integration of the less-privileged groups, is aimed at promoting pilot projects co-financed by the Member States and likely to produce new strategies for combating poverty. Transnational networks have been set up bringing together associations involved in solidarity in the Member States as a whole, thereby bringing into play the energies of all sectors of society.

Moreover, in the framework of the action programme implementing the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, the Commission has presented to the Council a recommendation aimed at recognising everyone's right to adequate resources under the social security systems.

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10 François DUBET, "Jeunesse et travail : de quelles crises s'agit-il ?" (Youth and labour : what crisis ?) in Lettre d'information de la FONDA (Fondation pour la vie associative), n° 63, Paris, April 1989, p. 4.

11 Edgar MORIN, "Les jeunes expriment le délabrement moral du monde où ils vivent" (Young people point to the moral decay of the world in which they live), Le Monde, 13 novembre 1990, p. 2. See also the report "La mal-vie des jeunes dans les cités" (The malaise of young people in the cities), Le Monde Diplomatique, December 1990.

Tackling illiteracy

As regards illiteracy, the Community has for over ten years now been trying to understand and overcome this phenomenon. On 14 May 1987 the Council and the Ministers for Education adopted a European programme to step up the fight against illiteracy. Since September 1988, the Commission has been supporting a network of seventeen pilot projects in the twelve Member States aimed at in-depth consideration of the most effective preventive measures in the fight against illiteracy.

A colloquium on functional illiteracy organised by the EC Commission in May 1990 during the UN International Illiteracy Year highlighted the close links between illiteracy, poverty and long-term unemployment.

The world conference on "Education for all", organised by UNESCO in 1990, gave the Member States an opportunity to press the case for more emphasis on basic education, by stressing quality criteria. On that occasion, the Commission prepared a booklet entitled Prevention and Treatment of Illiteracy in the EC.

Tackling failure in the education sector

In the field of education, and more specifically in the area of failure at school, the measures implemented by the European Community, on the one hand, and the actions which could be considered under the Maastricht Treaty, on the other, will be examined.

The measures already implemented

The only legal instrument to date specifically aimed at failure at school is a Council Resolution of December 1989[12] (Annex 1). The provisions of this Resolution indicate just what is involved for the individual and the Member States in combating failure at school. Furthermore, the resolution mentions various measures to combat failure at school at national level, including pre-school education, better guidance of pupils, the training of teachers, partnership with outside bodies, etc. Some actions are proposed at Community level, such as exchanges of information between Member States, studies and meetings on failure at school, visits by teachers, etc.

The Transition action programme, based on the concept of partnership, implemented between 1983 and 1987 30 projects throughout Europe aimed at the transition of young people aged between 14 and 18 from school to adult and working life. These partnership actions are aimed in particular at reducing the isolation of teachers and schools when confronted with the phenomenon of failure.

The new PETRA programme covering the years 1992/94 and concerning young people aged between 16 and 28 aims to give them some years of vocational training in addition to their compulsory education. Actions are also envisaged to develop career guidance.

12 Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 14 December 1989 on measures to combat failure at school (OJ C 27 - 6.2.1990).

Finally, it should be pointed out that the meeting of the Senior Education Officials held under the Portuguese Presidency in June 1992 was essentially devoted to the problem of failure at school in the European Community.

The Maastricht Treaty

The Maastricht Treaty, which came into force on 1 November 1993, provides, for the first time, a legal basis for education at Community level in Article 126 (see Annex). This does not involve defining a common education policy but contributing to the development of quality education, in particular through coordination and promotion measures. This Article concerns all levels of education.

It also suggests that the Community could facilitate and coordinate the setting up of partnerships between establishments, at all levels of education. The European Community is also called upon to develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems. The EURYDICE network (the Information Network on Education in the European Community), consisting of National Units and a European Unit, would thus be called upon to increase its activities. The setting up of a European "observatory", or a European network of national monitoring units on failure at school, such as was suggested in the meeting of the Senior Education Officials on this subject in 1992, could come within in the scope of Article 126.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the modernisation and internationalisation of the economy, education and training are of even greater importance than in the past because they constitute the indispensable conditions for citizens' participation in social life.

The knowledge, skills and know-how of citizens, who collectively constitute our human resources, will be the principal asset of Europe in facing the global competition which will be the hallmark of the 21st century. Acceleration in technological innovation requires not only that knowledge, skills and know-how be adapted but also that they be updated constantly. The stakes are high; they are a direct challenge to education and training policies.

In view of the importance of education and training in the future of individuals and, beyond them, of the societies in which they live, the wholesale exclusion of individuals from the education system is a major cause for concern in all the Member States of the Community. Failure at school therefore goes beyond the strictly educational framework and has become an acute social problem.

The stakes are high. The problem is a tremendous challenge to the Europe of tomorrow, to the foundations of this huge democratic area which is already beginning to emerge, and to the real meaning of European citizenship. Society has therefore reached a crossroads; a decision must urgently be taken lest we build a Europe with vague democratic outlines, devoid of substance, a European Community without any genuine element of solidarity, a Europe without a soul.

PART I

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN EUROPE: ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE

PRESENT POSITION

A. THE CONTEXT: THE PERSISTENCE AND SERIOUSNESS OF FAILURE AT SCHOOL - SOME STATISTICS

One way of understanding the phenomenon of failure at school is to measure each Member State's investment in education. This comparison is difficult, however, in view of the complexity of the problem and the individual characteristics of national structures. Of the data available on this issue, use will be made of the OECD indicators, i.e. public expenditure on education per pupil (Table 1a) and education expenditure as a proportion of total public expenditure (Table 1b); the latter is a rough guide to the relative importance attached to education as compared to other public sector activities in each country.

▶ TABLE 1:

a) Public expenditure on education per pupil (in U.S. Dollars) in 1988 and 1991

STATE	PRE-SCOOL		PRIMARY		SECONDARY		HIGHER		ALL LEVELS	
	1988	1991	1988	1991	1988	1991	1988	1991	1988	1991
BELGIUM	1 524	1 163	2 115	1 248	4 050	2 244	4 987	2 230	3 111	2 012
DENMARK	2 607	4 376	3 204	4 397	4 253	5 378	10 847	7 685	4 632	5 489
GERMANY	941	-	2 101	-	2 659	-	5 085	-	3 047	-
SPAIN	914	1 777	1 158	1 861	1 586	2 730	1 934	3 242	1 419	2 490
FRANCE	1 569	2 163	1 885	2 591	3 073	4 640	3 780	4 760	2 802	3 847
IRELAND	1 060	1 523	1 125	1 542	1 891	2 488	4 740	5 587	1 666	2 236
ITALY	1 588	-	2 457	-	2 887	-	4 250	-	3 082	-
LUXEMBOURG	4 338	-	4 965	-	5 681	-	12 238	-	5 854	-
NETHERLANDS	-	-	1 913	-	2 263	-	9 542	-	3 376	-
PORTUGAL	707	1 506	1 314	2 110	1 373	2 364	4 451	6 161	1 528	2 551
UNITED KINGDOM	1 659	2 233	2 105	2 794	2 763	4 255	7 960	9 621	3 008	4 268
SWEDEN	2 240	2 501	4 423	5 470	5 146	6 635	6 334	8 561	4 818	6 157
U.S.A.	2 778	4 014	3 566	5 177	4 370	6 472	6 386	11 802	4 301	6 527
JAPAN	630	-	2 550	-	2 325	-	2 504	-	2 523	-

Source: OECD. Education at a glance : OECD indicators. Paris, 1992 and 1993 editions.
Expenditure per pupil - calculated in national currency by dividing the expenditure by level of education by the number of full-time equivalent pupils. The result is then converted into U.S. dollars by dividing it by the purchasing power parity exchange rate (PPA) between that country's currency and the US dollar.

b) Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure in a number of OECD countries (1988 and 1991 data)

	1988	1991		1988	1991		1988	1991		1988	1991
BELGIUM	10.5 %	-	FRANCE	10.2 %	10.6 %	NETHERLANDS	10.9 %	9.8 %	JAPAN	11.7 %	11.4 %
DENMARK	11.6 %	10.4 %	IRELAND	11.5 %	-	PORTUGAL	10.7 %	-	SWITZERLAND	14.7 %	15.9 %
GERMANY	9.1 %	8.0 %	ITALY	9.4 %	-	UNITED KINGDOM	11.4 %	11.5 %	SWEDEN	9.6 %	10.4 %
SPAIN	9.7 %	-	LUXEMBOURG	10.2 %	-				USA	13.7 %	14.7 %

Source: OECD. Education at a glance : OECD indicators Paris, 1992 and 1993 editions.

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Public expenditure on education, most of which falls under total public expenditure, indicates the importance of education in most Member States.

Examination of these figures shows that the investment in education per head of population in the Member States is roughly equivalent. Between 1988 and 1991, certain countries have increased their investment while others have reduced it slightly. For instance, in 1993 Portugal devoted 13.8% of its public expenditure to education. The relatively low level of public contribution in some Member States is compensated for by the not insignificant proportion of private investment in education. (This is the case in Germany in particular).

The budget of the Community Member States is not however sufficient to mitigate the high level of failure at school. A study has been carried out on the "residual groups consisting of young people, who, although fulfilling the legal obligations, do not complete compulsory education "normally", either because they do not obtain a leaving certificate, or because they have repeated years and leave the education system before reaching the level corresponding to the end of compulsory education..."[13].

The conclusions of this European research show that, between 1986 and 1987, out of a little over 5 million young people aged 15 and 16, 550 000 approximately did not obtain any certificate at the end of their compulsory education or did not complete their education normally. This is equivalent to 10 - 12% of pupils being excluded from the education system at the end of compulsory education (Graph 2). It therefore appears that each year "in countries as different in the structure of their education systems as Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy, between 70 000 and 100 000 young people leave education without any vocational qualification whatsoever"[14].

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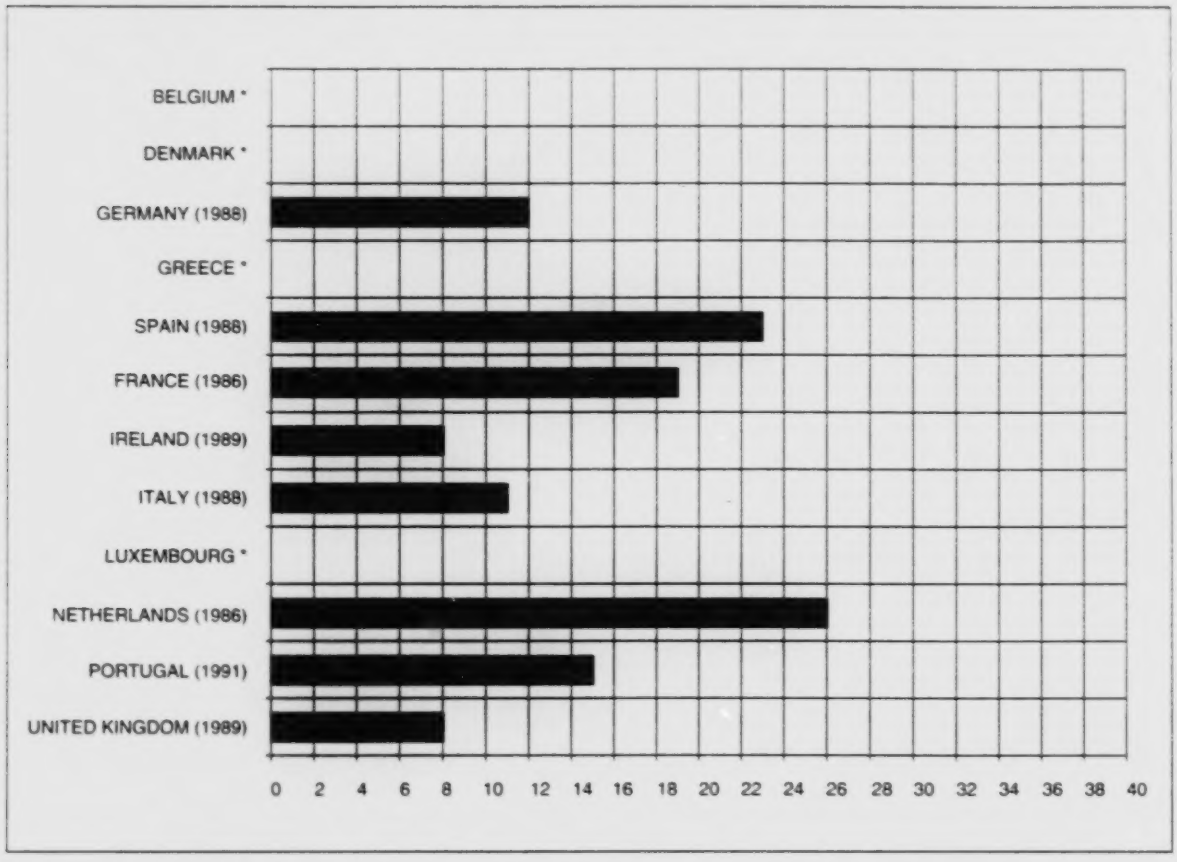
13 Jean GORDON, European Education and Social Policy Institute. Summary report on Les qualifications de scolarité obligatoire et de formation professionnelle (Compulsory education and vocational training qualifications) drawn up for the EEC, January 1990, p. 20.

14 Jean ANDRIEU, Report of the Conseil Economique et Social de France (Economic and Social Committee of France), L'espace éducatif européen, (The European Educational Area), June 1992, p. 92.

▶ **GRAPH 2:**

The proportion of children leaving secondary education without a certificate



* No data available

Source: Graham Room et al., Politiques nationales de lutte contre l'exclusion sociale (National policies on combating social exclusion). First annual report of the Monitoring Unit, Commission of the European Communities, DG V, Brussels 1991.

It is also interesting to analyse the cost of failure at school despite the difficulties in making exact assessments in this area. This has been the subject of research in a number of Member States. In 1984, in France, according to a report from its Economic and Social Committee[15], total expenditure from nursery school to university on pupils who left education without any qualification and for those who extended the duration of their education, by repeating years or changing courses, amounted to around FF 100 billion. It should be noted that total expenditure on education in the budget for that year amounted to FF 306 billion. Accordingly, it can be estimated that 30% of the budget is being allocated to costs arising from failure at school.

15 Jean ANDRIEU, Perspectives d'évolution des rapports de l'école et du monde économique face à la nouvelle révolution industrielle, (Prospects for change in relations between the school and the economic world in view of the new industrial revolution), Economic and Social Council of France, 14 October 1987.

In this connection also, in Belgium, a study published by the IRES[16] estimated that the cost of education in the French Community of Belgium could be reduced by approximately 10% if the practice of repeating the year was simply abolished.

Both these studies show how the high cost of failure at school becomes a heavy burden on the financial equilibrium of some education systems.

These figures should however be treated with caution. Even if they are a reflection of a real and profound malaise in the education systems of the Member States, they should nevertheless be kept in perspective. Because of the peculiarities of the education systems, the basic indicators are very different from one Member State to another, and for this reason extreme caution is required, especially when making comparisons.

Part of the complexity of the concept of failure at school is due to the wide range of differences in the situations in the Member States. In addition, the way it is perceived varies just as much, not only according to the Member State involved but also according to the parties involved in the education system.

B. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF THE MEMBER STATES

Failure at school varies in extent and form depending on the education system. To have a better understanding of its effects, it is necessary to place it in the context of each education system and in particular to try to understand the structural organisation of the various pathways in education and the procedures for awarding certificates which are central to each system.

A detailed description of individual education systems can be found in the descriptive notes on each Member State at the end of this report. Each information sheet includes several key parameters of the educational pathways of pupils throughout their education. A comparative analytical summary of these parameters is given in the following tables (Table 2).

16 IRES, Radioscopie de l'Enseignement en Communauté Française de Belgique, (Analysis of education in the French Community of Belgium), 1992.

▶ TABLE 2:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF EDUCATION PATHWAYS (assessment and guidance) IN THE TWELVE MEMBER STATES

	BELGIUM	DENMARK	GERMANY
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION	- optional from age 2 1/2 to 6	- optional from age 3 to 7	- optional from age 3 to 6
COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- length: 12 years (6 years of primary, 6 years of secondary) - from age 6 to 18, part time from age 15	- length: 9 years - from age 7 to 16 - *Folkeskole*: single structure	- length: 12 years (4 years of primary and 8 years of secondary education) - from age 6 to 18 - 9 years of full time education - possibility of final 3 years on a part-time basis
PRIMARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment - promotion not automatic - annual repetition of the year possible, once only unless with an exemption - final certificate on the basis of results or after local examination	- continuous internal assessment - automatic promotion	- continuous internal assessment - automatic promotion from 1st to 2nd year; thereafter depending on results - annual repetition of the year possible
ADMISSION TO LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION	- without examination - provided primary education has been completed successfully - on the basis of the final primary certificate	- without examination - primary and lower secondary education form a single structure	- without examination or certificate - depending on results of school work
LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- internal assessment - non-automatic promotion - annual repetition of the year possible	- internal assessment - automatic promotion	- internal assessment - promotion not automatic - annual repetition of the year possible
END OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- certificates awarded by the school and later approved by a Commission	- no final general examination - possibility of taking examinations in certain subjects chosen by the pupil	- internal examination
INITIAL EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE	- at age 12, at the beginning of secondary education, in the traditional type, at age 14 in the reformed type in the French and German-speaking Communities - at age 13, for vocational education, in the Flemish Community	- at age 16, after the *Folkeskole* - optional guidance courses from the age of 14	- at age 10, at the end of the *Grundschule* - but in some *Länder*, guidance is given in the 5th and 6th years
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES	none	none	none

	GREECE	SPAIN	FRANCE
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION	- optional between age 3 1/2 and 5 1/2	post-reform - optional 2 cycles - from age 0 to 3 and from age 3 to 6	- optional from age 2 to 6
COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- length: 9 years (6 years of primary and 3 years of secondary education) - from age 5 1/2 to 15	pre-reform - length: 8 years (basic education) - from age 6 to 14 post-reform - length: 10 years (6 years of primary and 4 years of secondary education) - from age 6 to 16	- length:10 years (5 years of primary and 5 years of secondary education) - from age 6 to 16
PRIMARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment - automatic promotion except in the event of lengthy absences, when an examination is taken;in the event of failure, the pupil repeats the year - primary certificate without examination	pre-reform - promotion from cycle to cycle on the basis of the results of continuous internal assessment - no certificate or examination post-reform - automatic promotion, except at the end of cycles - repetition of the year possible, but exceptional, if results are unsatisfactory - no certificate or examination	- continuous internal assessment - promotion decided by the teachers' council, depending on results - repetition of the year possible at the end of a cycle - no certificate
ADMISSION TO LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION	- no entrance examination - on the basis of the primary education certificate	pre- and post-reform - without examination	- without examination
LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment - promotion, depending on results, decided by the teachers' council - repetition of the year possible	pre-reform - promotion examination if results unsatisfactory - repetition of the year possible post-reform - automatic promotion - exceptional repetition of the year at the end of a cycle	- continuous internal assessment - repetition of the year possible - promotion depending on results - after national examination, the *BEPG* certificate, but this is not a condition of entrance to upper secondary education
END OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- leaving certificate, depending on results - otherwise an examination is organised for pupils who are not awarded this certificate	pre-reform - leaving certificate without examination, provided the 3 cycles of the general basic education have been successfully completed post-reform a school leaving certificate, whatever the level attained by the pupil	- in order to complete compulsory education, pupils must have one year of full-time education, either in the traditional *lycée* or in a vocational *lycée*
INITIAL EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE	- at age 15 and educational guidance courses between age 12 and 14	pre-reform : after the *EGB*, at age 14 post-reform - at age 16, at the beginning of the *Bacchillerato* course	- at age 14, in 3rd year of the *collège*
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES	none	none	- in the CE 2 "further progress" cycle, around age 9 - at the beginning of *collège* - in the 2nd year of the *lycée* (5th year of secondary education)

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	IRELAND	ITALY	LUXEMBOURG
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION	- no national system, but may be provided in the National Schools from age 4	- optional from age 3 to 5	- compulsory from the age of 4 (from age 4 to 6)
COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- length: 9 years (6 years of primary and 3 years of secondary education) - from age 6 to 15	- length: 8 years (5 years of primary and 3 years of secondary education) - from age 6 to 14	- length: 11 years (2 years of pre-school, 6 years of primary and 3 years of secondary education) - from age 4 to 15
PRIMARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment and assessment by standardised tests - automatic promotion - no examination or final certificate	- internal continuous assessment - promotion on the basis of pupil's progress - annual repetition of the year possible - final examination and *Licenza Elementare* certificate	- continuous internal assessment - annual repetition of the year possible - no examination or final certificate
ENTRANCE TO LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION	- entrance examinations set by certain schools	- on the basis of the *Licenza Elementare* certificate	- national entrance examinations for separate streams (general and technical) with tests in French, German and Mathematics
LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment - automatic promotion	- continuous internal assessment on the basis of written observations set out in a report - annual repetition of the year possible	- continuous internal assessment - annual repetition of the year possible - promotion not automatic
END OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- national examination with two levels of difficulty (Ordinary and Higher) for Junior Certificate (since 1992)	- final examination to obtain the *Licenza Media*, administered by the school - guidance counselling	- certificate at the end of compulsory education, without examination, on the basis of results
INITIAL EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE	- at age 12	- at age 14	- at age 12
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES	none	none	none

	NETHERLANDS	PORTUGAL	UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND, WALES, NORTHERN IRELAND, SCOTLAND)
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION	- no official pre-school education; integrated into the primary school from the age of 4 - depending on the local authority, possibility of centres for the under -4's	- optional from age 3 to 5	- no national system; local and regional education authorities have discretion to provide it or not - optional from age 3 to 5
COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- length: 12 years (8 years of primary and 4 years of secondary education) - from age 5 to 16 - 1 year part-time compulsory under age 18	- length: 9 years (4 years 1st cycle, 2 years 2nd cycle, 3 years 3rd cycle) - from age 6 to 15	- length: 11 years, from age 5 to 16 England and Wales (6 years of primary and 5 years of secondary education); Scotland (7 years of primary and 4 years of secondary education) Northern Ireland length: 12 years, from age 4 to 16 (7 years of primary and 5 years of secondary education)
PRIMARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment - automatic promotion, but exceptionally repetition of the year - no final examination or certificate	- continuous internal assessment - automatic promotion, but repetition of the year possible after 2nd year, in exceptional cases - no final examination or certificate	- internal assessment and assessment using standardised tests - automatic promotion - repetition of the year exceptional, in cases of illness - no final examination or certificate
ENTRANCE TO LOWER SCONDARY EDUCATION	- on the opinion of the admissions committee of the school on the basis of: * a report drawn up by the head of the primary school * additional information on pupil's ability is required for the traditional courses (*HAVO, VWO*)	- no examination - provided primary education has been successfully completed	England, Wales and Scotland - no examinations but some schools in England have selection tests Northern Ireland - national standardised selection examination at 11 years for allocation of Grammar School places
LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROCEDURES	- continuous internal assessment - promotion not automatic - annual repetition of the year possible	- internal assessment - promotion not automatic - annual repetition of the year possible	- internal assessment and assessment using standardised tests - automatic promotion, repetition of the year exceptional
END OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION	- internal and national examination	- no examination - certificate	- national examinations
INITIAL EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE	- at age 13 (transition year from age 12 to 13)	- at age 15, after the 3rd cycle of basic education - educational guidance courses from age 14	- at age 16 in principle - educational guidance courses between age 14 and 16
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES	none	none	- at age 7, 11, and 14 in England and Wales - at age 8, 12 and 14 in Scotland - at age 8, 11 and 14 in Northern Ireland

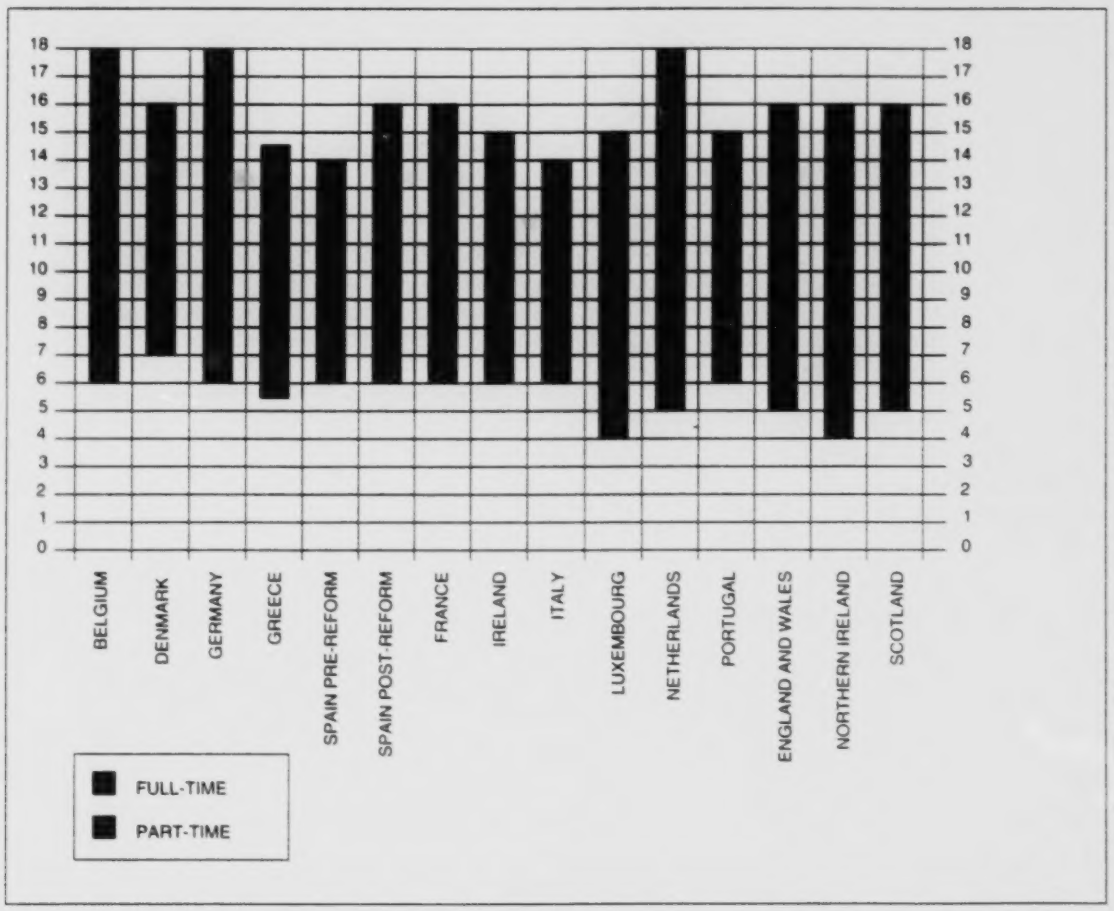
It can be seen from these tables that, although each Member State manages the flow of pupils through compulsory and post-compulsory education according to its own individual arrangements, it is nevertheless possible to identify a number of common features aside from the characteristics peculiar to each system.

In most Member States, there are 9 years of compulsory education. It lasts for 8 years in Italy and in Spain, until the progressive implementation of the *LOGSE* reform (1990) is complete, and extends to 12 years in some countries, such as Belgium and Germany, where the last 3 years may be attended on a part-time basis, generally in the form of sandwich courses. In the Netherlands, compulsory education covers 13 years, including compulsory education at least on a part-time basis up to age 18.

Compulsory education most frequently begins at the age of 6, but it has recently been lowered to the age of 4 in Luxembourg, where attendance at the last year of pre-school education is compulsory, and in Northern Ireland. On the other hand, in Denmark it begins at age 7 (see Graph 3).

▶ **GRAPH 3:**

The length of compulsory education in the European Community



Source: This diagram was prepared by the European Unit of EURYDICE from data available on the length of compulsory education.

Three major differences emerge from an analysis of the structural organisation of school pathways in the various education systems. They differ depending on whether or not:

- pupils are divided into streams or different types of education at the beginning of lower secondary education;

- promotion to the next class is automatic;

- certificates are awarded at the end of a cycle, whether or not such certificates when awarded depend on an internal or a central examination.

1. GUIDANCE IN THE COURSE OF EDUCATION

Primary education is provided for children up to the age of 10 or 12 in all the Member States. The decision to select a type of education at secondary level is taken between the ages of 12 and 16. In some Member States, options are not available until the ages of 14 to 16. In others, pupils choose between the ages of 10 and 12. The length of secondary education varies from 3 to 9 years. In most countries, a distinction is made between lower and upper secondary education. Pupils have a choice of general, technical or vocational education.

There are three principal models of educational guidance. First of all, the trend in the Scandinavian countries is to provide one continuous educational structure throughout compulsory education. At the other extreme, some education systems are organised into different streams or types of education from the age of 12-13, or even from the age of 10. These systems are mainly to be found in the Member States situated at the geographical centre of the European Community. Austria and Switzerland are also in this group.

Between both these extremes, the provision of a common general education during the first three or four years of secondary education is typical of the model which we call "common core syllabus" education, with deferred guidance. Southern Europe and the United Kingdom share this characteristic.

Organisation of systems of lower secondary education

SINGLE CONTINUOUS SYSTEM
COMMON CORE CURRICULUM / COMMON GENERAL EDUCATION
DIFFERENTIATED BRANCHES OR TYPES OF EDUCATION

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a) Single continuous system

The single structure is essentially favoured by Denmark. Outside the European Community, it is also a characteristic of other Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway and Finland. There is continuity of education throughout compulsory education, without any break between primary and the first level of secondary education. Catered for from the age of 7 until the age of 16 in the *Folkeskole*, Danish pupils follow an identical curriculum, which is taught by a team of teachers. Different teachers are responsible for individual subjects and some teachers, including the form teacher, have the pupils throughout the whole of their education. Promotion of pupils from one class to the next is automatic.

At the end compulsory education in the *Folkeskole*, pupils receive a school leaving certificate, which is not a vocational qualification. Post-compulsory education offers a variety of options open to pupils without any diploma or entrance examination requirements.

b) Structure with a common core curriculum at the end of primary

This structure has typically a common curriculum of general education during the first 3 or 4 years of secondary education. Guidance regarding the rest of the pupil's school career is therefore deferred. This is the case in Italy, Greece, Spain (post-reform), Portugal, France and the United Kingdom.

This common core education, throughout the whole of lower secondary education, is aimed at providing a broad foundation of general education. In Italy, the three years of the *Scuola Media* at the end of compulsory education provide traditional and general education for all pupils. In Greece, the *Gymnasio* also provides a common curriculum for all during the same period, while in France[17], the *collège* caters for all post-primary pupils for a period of 4 years.

In England and Wales, since the educational reform of 1988, all schools are obliged to teach the National Curriculum which comprises three core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science, plus Welsh in Wales) and seven foundation subjects. Religious education is also compulsory, and schools may choose to add other subjects. The choice of optional subjects is very limited, since only 10% of the time can be devoted to them.

The same principle applies in Northern Ireland where, since the reform in 1989, pupils in all primary and secondary schools (including Grammar Schools) follow the common Northern Ireland Curriculum. Subjects are grouped under six Areas of Study (English, mathematics, science and technology, the environment and society, creative and expressive studies, and - at secondary level - language studies).

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17 In France the guidance possibility which formerly existed at the end of the second year of lower secondary education, leading to a vocational stream, has gradually been abolished. Nevertheless, in addition to the common education provided during the guidance cycle (3rd and 4th years of lower secondary education), there are several types of subject options which gradually lead pupils to decisions on career options by the end of the 4th year (last year of lower secondary education). Since November 1993, this possibility has been reintroduced by an act on employment, which enables pre-apprenticeship classes to be re-opened for 14-year-olds.

In Scotland, on the other hand, education authorities have greater autonomy as regards the curriculum. They are expected to follow certain guidance issued under the 1988 reforms. In the first two years, all pupils follow a common general course, English, mathematics, science and a modern foreign language being compulsory.

Options are however introduced towards the end of this period, at about age 14, although at this stage they do not generally influence the direction of future study.

In principle, in all these countries, admission to lower secondary school is automatic. Pupils who successfully complete primary school do not take any examination at the end of primary education and do not receive any certificate, except in Italy, where there is still an examination at the end of primary school, the *Licenza Elementare*, involving two written tests and one oral test. The examination board, consisting of the class teachers and two other teachers, award a primary certificate which gives access to secondary education.

In England, most children (approximately 90%) attend a Comprehensive School from the end of primary education, regardless of their ability, but there are also some more selective secondary schools - Grammar Schools - which select pupils on the basis of entrance examinations. Those who fail the examination go to Secondary Modern Schools which accept them without any examination. These types of school cater for only 3.4% and 3.8% respectively of pupils.

In Northern Ireland, approximately 35% of pupils are admitted to Grammar Schools on the basis of a national standardised selection tests at age 11. The other pupils (65%) enter Secondary Schools.

In Scotland and Wales, effectively all pupils go to Comprehensive Schools.

At the end of lower secondary education, pupils have in general reached school leaving age. Some leave school, others continue and are guided towards the more specialised courses of upper secondary education, in accordance with either their own choice or decisions taken by the *conseil de classe* or by their teachers on the basis of their school reports.

In France, the pupil is associated with this decision through a "personal plan" of training and social and vocational integration, drawn up in the course of lower secondary education with the help of parents, teachers, guidance and health staff. The *conseil de classe* has the power to decide on the future direction of the pupil's education on the basis of this plan and continuous assessment of the pupil.

In general, upper secondary education is organised in branches providing either general education, technical education or vocational training. The last two lead directly to employment, while the first tends to lead to longer courses of study.

c) Differentiated structures at the end of primary education

These education systems have two distinct levels of primary education and lower secondary education, with a guidance procedure leading to differentiated streams or types of education after primary education or from the second year of secondary education. This kind of distribution of pupils at the beginning of secondary is found in certain Member States - Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium.

After primary education, these Member States offer a range of secondary education options. The destination of pupils is generally based on their school results. In certain cases, admission to certain streams may depend on an entrance examination (Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands).

In most cases, the initial guidance determines the pupil's school career, despite the fact that switching streams or branches is possible in theory.

In Germany, after 4 years of primary education or 6 years in certain *Länder*, the decision is taken on selection for one of three types of education offering different levels of general education. These are the *Hauptschule*, the *Realschule* (leading to vocational training) and the *Gymnasium* (education preparatory to higher education).

Even though there are bridges between these types of education, the decision which is taken at an early stage in education is of a fairly rigid nature. Attempts have been made, with rather mixed results, to lessen the impact, through the establishment of a comprehensive school, the *Gesamtschule*, which offers a common curriculum or integrates the three types of education in the same school. In addition, some *Länder* have introduced a two year cycle common to all pupils at the end of primary education. In fact, however, the basic decisions are taken at the end of the *Grundschule*.

In Luxembourg, at the end of primary education, pupils are allocated, according to ability, to *classes complémentaires* ("supplementary classes" providing a short practical education), or to general or technical secondary schools, for which there must have passed an entrance examination set at national level. In these types of education, the first year is a guidance year.

In Ireland, several types of schools provide the final three years of compulsory education - Secondary, Vocational, Comprehensive and Community Schools. Both Comprehensive and Community schools are general, comprehensive schools. They have only recently been set up and cater for only 2% and 6% of pupils respectively. Secondary Schools cater for 60% of pupils and Vocational Schools 30%.

Initially intended and organised as distinct educational routes - Vocational Schools for vocational education and Secondary Schools for traditional education - all schools now tend to offer a general curriculum combining traditional and vocational subjects. Many schools offer a wide range of options, but in Vocational Schools technical and vocational subjects continue to dominate. Admission to some schools depends on results in an entrance examination set by the school. Comprehensive and Community Schools admit pupils without any prior selection. Only three subjects which are prescribed in the Junior Cycle curriculum, the other subjects being chosen as options.

In the Netherlands, pupils are allocated to streams on the basis of their results and the decisions of the teachers' guidance councils[18]. Admission to secondary education is decided on after obtaining the opinion of the school's admissions committee, on the basis of the pupil's results as recorded in the report drawn up by the head of the primary school. Secondary schools may also set an entrance examination. However, in order to avoid early specialisation, the first year of secondary education is a transition class. There are various types of education - pre-university (*VMO*), general education (*HAVO* and *MAVO*) and the first level of vocational education (*LBO*).

In Belgium, pupils who have not obtained the *certificat d'études de base* (primary education certificate) at the end of primary education or who are considered too weak, may be admitted to a secondary *classe d'accueil* (reception class, called "first year B"). From second year onwards, these pupils, for the most part, go into vocational education, to which 21% of pupils are admitted.

In the French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, the first secondary cycle is divided into two types of education, traditional secondary education (so-called "type II"), consisting of a first cycle with various streams, which continues alongside reformed education (so-called "type I"), organised on the basis of a common core curriculum for the first two years. Traditional secondary education (type II) includes two cycles of three years, and two branches, general and technical, which are relatively self-contained. Within each of these branches, education is differentiated according to the options chosen. Schools of this type are now a minority (3.5% of pupils).

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, since 1989, a single structure has been retained with branches - general, technical, artistic, vocational - but these four types of education are not organised separately in the first two year cycle, except for the vocational branch.

2. ASSESSMENT AND PROMOTION

In all Member States, continuous assessment of pupils is undertaken by the teacher or by the teaching staff collectively, both in primary and throughout lower secondary education.

Some Member States have however introduced national assessment at certain key stages of education. In England and Wales, since 1988, learning objectives have been set and are to be assessed at three key stages (at age 7, 11 and 14). National Curriculum Tests are used in addition to the assessments made by the teacher and the school. In Scotland, national assessment tests are given at age 8, 12 and 16. Teachers are responsible for the administration of these tests and use the results for diagnostic purposes.

18 A complete reform of lower secondary education introducing a common core curriculum for all pupils is nevertheless being implemented gradually from the beginning of the 1993/94 academic year.

In France, at the beginning of the CE2 "further progress" cycle of primary education, at the age of 9, in the first year of the *collège* at age 11, and at about age 16 in the *lycée*, national assessment tests in reading, writing, and mathematics are given at the beginning of the school year, so as to identify pupils' possible weaknesses and remedy them.

▶ **TABLE 3:**

Repeating the year in the Member States of the European Community

	PRIMARY LEVEL	LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL	UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL
BELGIUM	possible every year, maximum: once each class, unless exemption granted	possible every year	possible every year
DENMARK	automatic promotion	automatic promotion	automatic promotion
GERMANY	possible every year (except the first year)	possible every year	possible every year
GREECE	repeating exceptional	possible every year	possible every year
SPAIN (after the reform)	possible at the end of a cycle	possible every year (except the first year)	possible every year
FRANCE	possible at the end of a cycle	possible every year	possible every year
IRELAND	automatic promotion	automatic promotion	automatic promotion
ITALY	possible every year	possible every year	possible every year
LUXEMBOURG	possible every year	possible every year	possible every year
NETHERLANDS	possible every year	possible every year	possible every year
PORTUGAL	repeating exceptional, as from 1993/94	possible every year	possible every year
UNITED KINGDOM	automatic promotion	automatic promotion	automatic promotion

Promotion to the next class in primary education

PUPILS ARE PROMOTED AUTOMATICALLY
OBLIGATORY REPEATING OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE EVERY YEAR
OBLIGATORY REPEATING OF A YEAR POSSIBLE AT THE END OF A CYCLE
OBLIGATORY REPEATING OF A YEAR IS EXCEPTIONAL

In most Member States with deferred specialisation at secondary school, promotion from one class to the next throughout primary education is without a final examination and automatic, except in Italy, where repetition of the year is possible every year, but reasons must be given for the decision. In Spain and France, assessment is selective at the end of each two year cycle. It is therefore still possible to repeat the year at the end of each cycle of education. In Greece, repeating the year is an exception to the principle of automatic promotion; it is used only in the case of prolonged absence due to illness, and with the agreement of the parents. In Portugal, where repeating is still possible every year, the gradual implementation of the 1992 law aimed at restricting repeating to exceptional cases started at the beginning of 1993/94 school year.

In the education systems with a differentiated structure after primary education, promotion throughout primary education is generally not automatic. A number of variations in the practices of assessment should however be noted. In Germany, automatic promotion applies only between the first and second years of the *Grundschule*. In the following years, promotion to the next class depends on the pupil's results as assessed throughout the year on the basis of a marking scheme[19]. Restrictions on repetition of the year every year are also applied in Belgium, where it is now possible to repeat the same year only once in the course of primary education, unless an exemption is granted.

In differentiated educational structures, promotion from one year to the next throughout lower secondary education depends on the results of the pupil's work in the course of the year. Repetition of the year or a change of branch is recommended in the case of unsatisfactory results.

In Ireland and the United Kingdom, promotion to the next class is automatic at secondary level, as it is in Denmark until the end of the *Folkeskole*. On the other hand, in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and France, promotion from one class to the next depends on the results obtained by the pupil in class work throughout the year.

In upper secondary education, there is continuous assessment in most of the Member States. It is carried out every term in Greece, by means of written and oral tests, and also in Portugal, where, in order to pass the year, the pupil must obtain a mark of at least 10/20 at the end of the third term. In Italy, in addition to the marks in written tests, comments on the pupil's progress and behaviour at school are used for the purposes of assessment. In the United Kingdom, pupils' attainments are measured through written tests combined with the teachers' assessments. In France, there is national assessment of all pupils in the first year of the general or technological *lycée* (5th year secondary) in French, mathematics and modern languages, to detect any possible difficulties and to enable teachers to adjust their teaching. In addition, there is continuous assessment by the teacher in marks and comments.

In some cases, promotion is on the basis of marks given to the pupil for class work. This is the case in France, Portugal and the Netherlands, where the teaching staff council decides on promotion on the basis of the marks obtained. In Italy, it is also they who take the decision on the basis of the marks obtained in all subjects and the teachers' comments. In the other Member States, promotion to the next class is on the basis of an examination. In Greece, pupils take official written examinations in all subjects at the end of every year in order to be promoted to the next class, both in the technical/vocational schools and in the various *lykeia*. The final decision as regards promotion is the responsibility of the teaching staff.

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19 The marking scheme in Germany has 6 grades from "very good" (*sehr gut*) when results are above the required standard, to "unsatisfactory" (*ungenügend*) when the results do not meet the required standard and indicate that basic knowledge is patchy and that the pupil is unable to improve it.

3. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES

▶ TABLE 4:

Promotion and assessment in primary education

PRIMARY LEVEL	CONTINUOUS LOCAL ASSESSMENT WITHOUT EXTERNAL TESTS	LOCAL ASSESSMENT WITH EXTERNAL TESTS STANDARDISED OR NOT	NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES
ANNUAL REPETITION OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE	Belgium* - Germany (as from the second year) - Italy - Luxembourg - Netherlands - Portugal (repeating year exceptional)		
REPETITION OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE AT THE END OF A CYCLE	Spain - France		France (at the beginning of 3rd year) CE 2
AUTOMATIC PROMOTION	Denmark - Greece (repeating year is exceptional) - Irland - United Kingdom		England and Wales (age 7 and 11) Scotland (age 8 and 12) Northern Ireland (age 8 and 11 - pilot scheme)
FINAL CERTIFIATION WITH EXAMINATION	Belgium - Italy		
FINAL CERTIFIATION WITHOUT EXAMINATION	Greece		
NO FINAL CERTIFICATE OR FINAL EXAMINATION	Germany - Denmark - Spain - France - Luxembourg - Portugal - Netherlands - Ireland - United Kingdom		
NATIONAL EXAMINATION FOR PURPOSES OF SELECTION OR GUIDANCE		Luxembourg - Northern Ireland - Netherlands (optional at the end of the last year)	

* Each year may be repeated only once, unless an exemption is granted.

▶ TABLE 5:

Promotion and assessment in lower secondary education

LOWER SECONDARY	CONTINUOUS LOCAL ASSESSMENT WITHOUT EXTERNAL TESTS	LOCAL ASSESSMENT WITH EXTERNAL TESTS STANDARDISED OR NOT	NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES
ANUAL REPETITION OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE	Belgium - Germany - Greece - Spain (pre-reform) France - Italy - Luxembourg - Netherlands - Portugal		France (at the beginning of the *Collège*)
REPETITION OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE AT THE END OF A CYCLE			
AUTOMATIC PROMOTION	Denmark - Ireland (repeating year is exceptional) - United Kingdom		England and Wales (age 14)
FINAL CERTIFICATION WITH EXAMINATION	Belgium - Italy - Greece	France - Ireland - Netherlands (*LBO, MAVO*) - United Kingdom	
FINAL CERTIFICATION WITHOUT EXAMINATION	Denmark* - Germany - Spain - Luxembourg - Portugal		
NO FINAL CERTIFICATE OR FINAL EXAMINATION	Netherlands (*HAVO, VWO*)		

* Optional examination.

▶ TABLE 6:

Promotion and assessment in upper secondary general education

UPPER SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION	CONTINUOUS LOCAL ASSESSMENT WITHOUT STANDARDISED TEST	LOCAL ASSESSMENT WITH EXTERNAL STANDARDISED TEST	NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR MONITORING PURPOSES
ANNUAL REPETITION OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE	Belgium - Germany - Greece - Spain - France - Italy - Luxembourg - Netherlands - Portugal		France (at the begining of the first year of the *lycee*)
REPETITION OF THE YEAR POSSIBLE AT THE END OF A CYCLE			
AUTOMATIC PROMOTION	Denmark - Ireland - United Kingdom		United Kingdom (age 16)
FINAL CERTIFICATION	Belgium - Greece	Denmark - Germany - France Ireland - Italy - Luxembourg - Netherlands - United Kingdom	
FINAL CERTIFICAATION WITHOUT EXAMINATION	Spain - Portugal		

In general there is neither an examination nor any certificate at the end of primary education, except in Greece and Belgium where entrance to secondary education is, save in exceptional circumstances, subject to obtaining the *Certificat d'Etudes de Base* (primary education certificate), and in Italy, where an examination, the *Licenza Elementare*, is set by the primary school. Success in this examination leads to the award of the *Licenza Elementare* certificate which gives access to secondary education.

On the other hand, promotion from the lower secondary cycle to the upper secondary cycle is not automatic. Most Member States - irrespective of their structures - have a certificate at the end of lower secondary education (except in the Netherlands in the general and pre-university sections); admission to upper secondary (except in France, Portugal and the United Kingdom) is dependant on this certificate and in certain cases it determines the type of course which may be followed. The certificate is generally awarded on the basis of an examination (except in Greece, Spain, Luxembourg and Portugal).

In Italy, the final examination is held at the end of the third year of the *Scuola Media* (which corresponds to the end of compulsory education). The examination is administered by the school teachers and by an external chairman. Those who pass obtain the *Diploma di Licenza Media* to which is appended guidance for further education, the actual decision being left to the pupil. This diploma is necessary for entrance to upper secondary education.

In England and Wales and Northern Ireland, public examinations for the General Certificate of Secondary Education are held at the end of compulsory education (at about age 16). This certificate is the final qualification of many pupils. It is of such importance for pupils' future education that only those who have obtained good results can hope to continue in upper secondary education and take their A level examinations or a vocational qualification.

In France, on the other hand, the national *brevet* of the *collège* is awarded on the basis of the results of the final two years of the *collège* (recorded in the school report), and after taking a national examination. This certificate is not necessary for upper secondary education or to change to another type of education.

In Portugal, a certificate is awarded on the successful completion of the third year of the third cycle which completes compulsory education. It is necessary for admission to upper secondary education. An attendance certificate is given to pupils who have not reached the attainment targets but are over school leaving age.

In Spain, the certificate of lower secondary education is awarded, without examination, to pupils who have achieved the learning targets of that level of education. This admits pupils to upper secondary education and is an essential qualification to go on to the *Bachillerato* or to technical vocational training. A report indicating the subjects studied (for how many years and marks obtained) in the various areas of the curriculum, and providing guidance for the pupil's further education, is appended to the certificate.

This is also the case in Greece where the teaching staff council takes the decision to award the *Apolytirio Gymnasio*, the diploma awarded at the end of their studies to pupils who have successfully completed the *Gymnasio*, on the basis of their results in their term tests. Examinations are held only for pupils who do not receive this final certificate which is required for entry to all *Lykeia* and technical/vocational schools.

In Ireland, the Junior Certificate is awarded after a national examination set at two levels of difficulty (Ordinary and Higher) to cater for pupils' different abilities and aptitudes. It gives access to the Senior Cycle or to the transition year of interdisciplinary education.

In most Member States, the certificate awarded at the end of upper secondary education is based on a final external examination. Certificates may be awarded by individual schools, with the involvement of the education authorities.

At this level of education, Belgium and Greece are the only countries which have an internal examination without external moderation for the award of their certificates. In Belgium, at the end of upper secondary education in the general and technical sections, and the 7th year of vocational education, pupils who pass the school's internal examination receive a certificate of upper secondary education which gives them entry to higher education. The technical and vocational sections also offer a qualification to pupils at the end of the 6th year. In the French Community, pupils require an attestation of fitness for long higher education and university courses, and such certificates are given to pupils in the general and technical sections.

In Greece, pupils obtain the school leaving certificate on the basis of written and oral assessments of the year's work. The teaching staff council takes the final decision to award this qualification. The *Apolytirio lykeiou* gives access to higher education, provided however that the pupil is successful in a national examination in the group of subjects followed at school. The university entrance examination is highly selective. The certificate also gives access to the higher technological institute (*TEI*).

Portugal and Spain are exceptions, having no examination at all. The certificate is awarded on the basis of the pupil's results (continuous assessment) in both general and vocational education. It states the nature of the course, the final mark obtained and the subjects studied. It is necessary for university entrance and for certain modules of vocational training.

In England and Wales, general education courses lead to the public examinations for the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level, which give access to higher education. These are single-subject examinations, under the aegis of independent Examining Boards, in which pupils can take as many subjects as they wish. In addition, since 1989, the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Supplementary, has been introduced to extend the range of subjects for those taking A levels.

In Scotland, the Scottish Examination Board organises the Higher Grade examinations for the Scottish Certificate of Education which is the entry qualification for access to higher education.

In France, the *Baccalauréat*, which is awarded after a national examination at the end of general or technological education, is necessary to qualify for higher education. The technological *Baccalauréat* also qualifies for certain occupations. This examination is based on the official curriculum for the final years of the *lycée*. A pupil who fails it may repeat the examination the following year or request a secondary education certificate which does not permit access to higher education. Vocational *lycées* award specific vocational qualifications, *the certificat d'aptitude professionnel, brevet d'études professionnelles* and *baccalauréat professionnel*.

Italy is different. Only those pupils who have obtained good marks in their assessment in their last year are entitled to take the national examination at the end of upper secondary education. The *Maturità* certificate is awarded to those who pass this examination which, if it is in traditional, scientific or artistic secondary education, gives access to higher education. The certificate similarly awarded in technical education also gives access to higher education, and also entry to an occupation. The vocational education certificate following a short course leads only to employment.

In Germany, a national certificate, the *Abitur*, is awarded on the basis of an examination before an examination board, account being taken of the results obtained throughout the candidate's education. Depending on the type of the certificate, it may be possible to study any subject in any higher educational establishment, or only certain subjects in certain institutions.

In the Netherlands, the leaving certificates of lower vocational education (*LBO*), of general secondary education (*HAVO* and *MAVO*) and of pre-university education (*VWO*) are awarded after an internal examination set and marked by the school and a national written examination. Final assessment consists of the average of the marks obtained in the internal and national examinations. On the other hand, the final examination of vocational upper secondary education (*MBO*) is completely internal.

In Ireland, the Leaving Certificate examinations taken at the end of upper secondary education are set by the Department of Education Inspectors. The papers are marked by teachers under the supervision of advisory examiners who are directed by Chief Examiners who are school Inspectors. Candidates choose the subjects in which they wish to be examined. Examinations are set at two levels, Ordinary Level and Higher Level. The Leaving Certificate gives access to higher education and is also used as a selection test for entry to some forms of employment.

In Luxembourg, there is continuous assessment throughout secondary education. At the end of the final year, there is a national, written examination on the subjects studied during the final year. A *certificat de fin d'études secondaires* is awarded to successful candidates and this gives access to higher education.

C. FAILURE AT SCHOOL - A RELATIVE CONCEPT

In June 1992, the Portuguese Presidency took the initiative of organising a meeting of Senior Officials from the Education Ministries, which was devoted entirely to measures to combat failure at school. Background information documents prepared with the collaboration of EURYDICE provided an overview of the definitions of failure at school as understood in the various Member States.

It is clear that the concept of failure at school takes different forms according to the Member State in question and is difficult to define.

In the Danish context, where the practice of repeating the year does not exist during the 9 years of compulsory education, failure at school means that there is an imbalance between the pupil's skills, natural abilities and ability to benefit from education[20]. Dropping out of education at the end of compulsory education (10% of students) is also included in this definition.

In the education system in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, the term "failure at school" does not even exist. The concept of failure at school is covered by the concept of "under-achieving" and indicates that a pupil does not succeed in reaching his individual potential[21].

In the Scottish system, reference is made to individual learning difficulties caused by a disability (mental, physical, emotional or social) and/or inappropriate curriculum or teaching methods rather than "failure at school", and this is measured by the staying-on rate after school-leaving age, which was 52.6% in 1990[22].

The French system understands failure at school mainly in terms of those who leave school without any qualification. Failure is also quantified in the course of education by the educational difficulties of pupils which prevent them from attaining a particular level of skills and knowledge by a particular age[23]. The most frequently used indicator is the rate for repeating the year, which was 8.1% in the first year of primary education (1989/90), 11.1% in the second year of lower secondary education (1990/91) and 15.4% in the first year of upper secondary education (1990/91).

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20 Reply from the Danish National Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, July 1992.

21 Reply from the English Unit of EURYDICE to question EU92000207, 1990.

22 Reply from the Scottish Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, 1992.

23 Reply from the French Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, 1992.

In Greece, failure at school is linked to the level attained by the pupil compared to the aims and objectives of the curriculum, and is measured by various assessment methods[24]. It is expressed in terms of illiteracy and drop-out rates. The latter was 1.8% in the major cities and 8.1% in rural areas for the three years of lower secondary education (1987).

In Portugal, failure at school is the inability of the pupil to attain the objectives generally defined for each stage of education[25]. The indicators used are mainly the rates of repetition of the year, of drop-outs and of examination failures. The rate of repetition of the year was 23% in primary education and 14.9% at the end of lower secondary education.

In Italy, failure at school, or *dispersione scolastica*, is considered to be the inability of a pupil to acquire basic knowledge. It is mainly assessed through drop-out rates and rates of repeating the year. The latter was 12.1% in lower secondary education in 1989/90.

In Spain, failure at school is understood in terms of "particular difficulties in attaining the general objectives set for basic education"[26]. The indicator most widely used is the failure rate in examinations. This was 10.6% for the sixth year of general basic education in 1990/91 and 22.6% for the first year of the *BUP (Bachillerato Unificado Polivalente)*. The rate for repeating the year was 16.3% in the second comprehensive cycle of secondary education (*BUP)* in 1987/88.

In Germany, failure at school is not clearly defined; it is perceived from the rates of repeating the year and of educational drop-out. In 1988, the rates of repeating the year were 1.4% in primary education and 4% in secondary education. The drop-out rate was 7.5% at the end of secondary education[27].

The Netherlands legislation stipulates that "the pupil must make progress especially in relation to himself"[28]. Failure at school is seen in particular in terms of early drop-out from education[29].

In Ireland, the term "failure at school" is not used[30]. The term used is "*low achievers*" and this stresses the failure of the pupil to reach his potential.

Luxembourg at present has no explicit reference system for failure at school, which is seen in terms of repetition of the year, drop-out and low educational output (an inadequate success rate as compared to the situation in other countries). The percentage of pupils with certificates at the end of general upper secondary education was 25% in 1992[31].

In Belgium, failure at school is defined in terms of cognitive objectives which have not been attained. It is measured by the extent of repetition of the year. In the French Community[32], the percentages of pupils who had fallen behind their year group were 26.5% at the end of

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24 Reply from the Greek Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, 1992.

25 Reply from the Portuguese Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, 1992.

26 Article 65 (3) of the Framework Law N° 1 of 3 October 1990 on the General Regulations for the Educational System (*LOGSE*).

27 Reply from the German Unitt of EURYDICE to question EU9100300, 1991.

28 RIVIERE R., L'échec scolaire est-il une fatalité? (Is failure at school inevitable?) Editions Hatier, Paris 1991.

29 Reply from the Netherlands Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, 1992.

30 RIVIERE R., op.cit.

31 Reply from the Luxembourg Unit of EURYDICE to question EU9200400 of the European Unit of EURYDICE, 1992.

32 LAFONTAINE D. and LEJONG M. (in collaboration), Radioscopie de l'enseignement en Communauté Française de Belgique, (Analysis of education in the French Community of Belgium), Experimental Education Department of the University of Liège, 1992.

primary education, 36% at the end of the first year of general secondary education and 62.8% in the 5th year of secondary education (1990/91). In the Flemish Community, they were 13.1% in 5th year primary (1987/88) and 33.08% at secondary education level (1990/91).

Examples of, or attempts at, definition of failure at school illustrate the relativity of the concept, depending on the education system in question. In fact, the express or implicit norm of success can vary depending on the educational tradition, the requirements of the curriculum and the assessment and guidance methods. Accordingly, deviations from the norm, represented by failure, can take different forms.

According to R. RIVIÈRE[33], there is a considerable de facto difference in the definitions, depending on whether stress is placed on child development or on reference to an established standard.

Thus, in the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland, where repeating the year is not the practice, a child's lack of process is defined in terms of its not having fulfilled its potential or by its not making individual progress. On the other hand, in countries which have maintained selective examination and assessment systems, failure at school is defined in terms of repeating the year, numbers leaving without a certificate or dropping out of education.

In most Member States, both concepts overlap, so failure at school is difficult to define precisely. Be that as it may, it still reveals the inability of the education system to ensure real equality of opportunity, despite all efforts in that direction. It is also an indication of the difficulty of both trying to achieve quality education and providing an adequate level of education for all, so as to give everyone the chance to play a full part in society.

33 RIVIERE R., op.cit.

PART II

THE CAUSES OF FAILURE AT SCHOOL IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

The concept of failure at school is both relative and difficult to define; attempting to explain its causes is also complex. Research literature abounds in studies and theories trying to interpret the phenomenon of failure at school, analysing the situations which give rise to it and defining its causes.

The analysis of the theories given in this report does not claim to be exhaustive. We will simply present the principal schools of thought and also attempt to show the development and the theoretical differences in the research which has marked the twentieth century.

A. THE INDIVIDUAL FACTORS WHICH ARE THE CAUSE OF FAILURE AT SCHOOL

The genetic movement

The genetic movement explains failure at school in terms of problems and deficiencies intrinsic to the individual which can be detected through tests. Originally, these tests were used to identify pupils requiring special help. At the beginning of the century, the French researchers Binet and Simon tried, to identify scientifically young people who were not suited to normal primary education using a scale for measuring intelligence and tests. Pupils, who were classified in the categories "mentally deficient", "backward" or "retarded" were then placed in remedial classes.

These tests gradually began to be used to assess the genetic potential of individuals and even of social classes. In 1917, L.M. TERMAN wrote, "It is almost certain that the fact that the children of the upper classes succeed better in the tests results especially from the superior quality of what they received at birth"[34].

The supporters of this movement[35] claimed that success at school depended on the intelligence which is inscribed in the genetic inheritance and which can be measured by the intelligence quotient - a single number with an average value of 100. On the basis of a curve of the distribution of intelligence in the population of western countries, the Gaussian curve (normal distribution), these authors explained failure and success at school in terms of the intelligence quotient:

- **Intelligence quotient below 90:** children in this category (25%) would encounter insurmountable difficulties in primary education, especially those with intelligence quotients between 70 and 80 (upper limit of mild mental deficiency).

- **Intelligence quotient between 90 and 100:** the children in this group, (approximately 25%), would have sufficient intelligence to cope adequately with primary education but would be likely to experience more difficulty in secondary education.

- **Intelligence quotient between 100 and 120:** individuals in this category (approximately 25%) were considered barely capable of completing the whole of secondary education.

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34 TERMAN L.M. et al., "Stanford revision and extension of the Binet-Simon scale for measuring intelligence" Baltimore, Warwich and York, 1917, quoted by SCHIFF M., L'intelligence gaspillée, (Wasted intelligence), Seuil, Paris, 1982, p. 32.

35 JENCKS C. "Inequality in retrospect" in Harvard Educational Review, 1973, 43, 1, p. 138-164.
DEBRAY-RITZEN P., Lettre ouverte aux parents des petits écoliers, (Open letter to parents of young pupils), Albin-Michel, Paris, 1978, p. 34, 64 ff.

- **Intelligence quotient between 120 and 140:** of the 25% of subjects falling into this category, some might experience educational difficulties, but most would obtain the baccalaureate. Some 10 to 15% could go to university. However, to continue at university, an intelligence quotient of at least 120 would be required. Literary studies and experimental sciences require a lower intelligence quotient than pure mathematics, which requires a quotient of over 130.

It should be stressed that the concepts used and the content of the tests have a socio-cultural bias. Reference to a norm denies the existence of the differences and the multiple relationships with knowledge existing in the social groups[36]. Furthermore, IQ tests lead to a hierarchical classification of individuals which goes hand in hand with a particular ideology. According to this theory, as intelligence is determined biologically, individuals are not all gifted by nature with the same intelligence. The essential role of the school is therefore to select those best suited to form an elite in the service of the country.

Some authors[37] have used these conclusions to claim that inequality between human beings was natural and thus to challenge any policy of equal opportunity and any remedy for failure at school. They held the view that failure at school justified the selection of individuals on the grounds that nature destined them for servile tasks or a leadership role; inequality was natural and it stood to reason that it was reflected in success at school and in society.

This school of thought, which was more anxious to advocate a social order based on so-called biological laws than to demonstrate genuine scientific rigour, has been sharply criticised by a number of experts in genetics. These deplore the fact that intelligence has been reduced to a score whereas the original meaning of intelligence covered "the ability to know, understand, imagine, invent, the ability to adapt to new situations and to discover solutions to unforeseen difficulties"[38]. Obviously, individuals can be characterised on the basis of a particular genetic inheritance, but they become what they are on the basis of experience, learning and environment; there are no genes for madness, language and intelligence.

The concept of man as represented by the genetic movement is discredited today in scientific circles. The ideology of gifts which it enshrined (a gifted or not-so-gifted child) lives on, however, in certain mentalities.

The psycho-affective movement

The psycho-affective movement links the process of personality building of the child with the progress of his education. Four major educational stages marked by cut-off points have been identified:

- the nursery school, the first stage in the child's separation from the world of his family and the beginning of his socialisation;

- the primary school, which is the real beginning of his status as a pupil and of initial learning. Furthermore, the changeover from primary school to secondary education generally corresponds to the period of pre-puberty;

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36 CHARLOT B., "Je serai ouvrier comme papa, alors à quoi ça me sert d'apprendre ?" (I will be a labourer like my father, what is the use of learning?) in Quelles pratiques pour une autre école? (Which practices for an alternative school?) Groupe français d'éducation nouvelle, éditions Casterman, 1979.

37 DEL'HAYE A., "Un fait vaut plus qu'un Lord-maire ou Galilée toujours humiliée" (A fact is worth more than a Lord Mayor or a Galileo humiliated) in Revue de la CGE, No 38, March-April 1978, p. 26.

38 JACQUARD A., Moi et les autres. (The others and I) Editions Point Virgule, Paris, 1983, p. 101.

- secondary education which, because of the changes involved and the fact that it coincides with adolescence, offers less security than primary education. The end of this level of education generally coincides with the end of compulsory education;

- higher education, where the student has intellectual and emotional independence.

Each transition necessitates an adjustment to new circumstances. Children do not all react in the same way to such demands on them. Some encounter difficulties which affect their behaviour at school. Educational difficulties can therefore be defined as a "sort of substitute for a psychological conflict which is less apparent but which affects the personality as a whole"[39].

The child can retreat into a total rejection of school. According to some authors, the rejection of school during adolescence is a reaction against the mother and the difficulty of eclipsing the father. The child may also react through a passive rejection of school which translates into a lack of initiative. "It is blamed on difficulties with the teachers or reactions to failure, but it may be a response to regressive positions which go beyond the educational problem proper"[40]. The intellectual inhibition which characterises such situations of rejection may give rise to serious neurotic problems.

There are also forms of failure which are less obvious but as serious, affecting "normal" pupils who have failed at school. A number of studies[41] have highlighted the frequency among students during the first months of secondary education of somatic problems resulting from deep anxiety. The pupil may also adopt contradictory attitudes, ranging from anger to day-dreaming, or manifesting sharp opposition to those around him, all attitudes indicative of emotional disorders. These problems go hand in hand with a lack of application in school by the pupil who has turned his interest to other things.

Some researchers have established a close correlation between failure at school and particular psycho-affective situations[42].

- This is the case with conflicts linked to separation. The school gradually separates the child from his family. This rupture perpetuates the anxiety of the baby separated from its mother. The child's adjustment to the new situations depends on the affective climate between child and mother, and more importantly on the family atmosphere. If the latter is tense, reactions may have a profound effect on education and lead to failure.

- In conflicts linked to rivalry, the feeling of rivalry in a child within the family may also exist at school because of competitiveness between pupils. An inferiority complex and feelings of low self-esteem may arise in emotionally weak children and lead them to a feeling of impotence when confronted with problems at school.

- Problems of puberty may also lead to situations of failure at school. The physical and emotional changes which occur during this period can destabilise adolescents and affect their education to a greater or lesser degree.

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39 ROUART J., NARLIAN R., SIMON J., L'échec scolaire, (Failure at school), in DE AJURIAGUERRA J., Manuel de psychiatrie de l'enfant, (Child psychiatry handbook) 1960, 3, pp. 333-403.

40 DE AJURIAGUERRA J., Manuel de psychiatrie de l'enfant, (Child psychiatry handbook), Editions Masson, Paris, 1977, p. 923.

41 MANNONI P., Troubles scolaires et vie affective chez l'adolescent, (Educational problems and the emotional life of the adolescent), Editions E.S.F., Paris, 1979, p. 10.

42 JEAMMET P., report published in Sauvegarde de l'enfance, (Protecting the child), No 4, 5, Paris, September 1979.

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According to supporters of this school of thought, failure at school is a response to the parental attitude of rejection or over-protection. Often, when parental authority is oppressive, the child transfers his aggression to the teachers and the school. During adolescence, "the often difficult building of the Ego exacerbates the spirit of independence and the reactions of opposition; it can increase conflicts with school and family authority. School is frequently perceived as a coercive institution unrelated to the new interests of this age group[43]".

B. CULTURAL DEPRIVATION

Statistical analysis reveals a variation in the extent of failure at school depending on social background and demonstrates that the phenomenon mostly affects the socially "disadvantaged" categories. These differences can be explained if account is taken of the economic, social and cultural conditions of the background. This point of view, which was very fashionable in the 1960s and 1970s, essentially explains failure at school in terms of deficits, categorised as socio-cultural handicaps or cultural deprivation. A child from a "disadvantaged" background does not have the necessary cultural bases for success at school.

The lack of cultural resources in the family and social background leads to backwardness in the intellectual development of the child, in particular in the verbal and cognitive areas. The home background is therefore unable to provide the child with the cultural and linguistic bases necessary for success at school.

There is said to be a close link between the cultural practices of a specific social milieu and the education of children from that background. The presence of books at home, the reading of newspapers and visits to cultural events are valuable indicators of intensive cultural activities which have an influence on success at school. Their general absence in "disadvantaged" families could be held to be largely responsible for failure at school.

Other studies have established a correlation between families' educational practices and children's success at school. The analysis of a series of tests[44] shows how the interest shown by parents in their child and its education influences its intellectual development. A good educational atmosphere in the home promotes a better balanced personality in the child and this ensures that the mental processes are better prepared.

Other authors go further and consider that "the poor quality of the general educational climate is a factor in poor educational adjustment because it expects fairly significant differences between the value system in the home and the value system in the school"[45].

It would appear, on the other hand, that the lack of contact between parents from disadvantaged groups and teachers tends to influence their children's school career[46].

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43 MANNONI P., op.cit., p. 19.

44 CHILAND C., L'enfant de six ans et son avenir. (The 6-year-old child and his future). Editions P.U.F., Paris 1971.

45 GILLY N., Bon élève, mauvais élève. (Good pupil, bad pupil). Editions Armand Colin, Paris, 1969.

46 LITT J.L., Origine sociale et scolarité. (Social background and education). Institut des Sciences Politiques et Sociales, U.C.L., Louvain-la-Neuve, 1980.

As regards language, a number of researchers[47] have used the concept of "sophisticated language"[48] (*langage élaboré*) to show how the linguistic background of the child affects his adjustment to the language of the school from an early stage. In a "socio-culturally rich" environment, the child learns a "sophisticated code" which corresponds to the code used in school. On the other hand, in "socio-culturally deprived" families, the child receives a "restricted code" made up of immediate, concrete exchanges without any nuances of expression. Language therefore operates as a selection criterion; as the restricted code is not the school code, children who use it are handicapped linguistically, and this has a detrimental effect on their education.

Other authors[49] prefer, however, to speak of a different language relationship, rather than of hierarchical languages and linguistic handicap. The child has a different relationship to language depending on the norms of his own culture, language being one aspect of his culture among many others. According to LABOV in particular, the language of black children in American ghettos is as rich and as developed as the language of middle-class children. However, there is no place for this language in school, where it is not recognised. In absolute terms, the child is not linguistically impoverished, but in school, he finds himself in an objective situation of linguistic inferiority.

Failure (or success) at school would also appear to be closely linked to the economic conditions of the pupil's social background. According to adherents of this theory[50], the cost, the return on education, and income levels determine the level and direction of studies and the extent of perseverance in them. In actual fact, a large proportion of students from poor backgrounds go no further than the beginning of higher education.

The manner in which higher education time is organised places a further burden on students from poorer backgrounds, who have to meet their subsistence requirements while pursuing their studies.

The social class to which a student belongs determines whether or not he has the economic power and the knowledge of how the education system operates. This can be a source of security or insecurity. Security makes long-term projects and precise planning possible. Insecurity allows only for short-term projects and uncertainty of achievement, hence the choice of shorter forms of education by children from the "disadvantaged" social classes.

The theory of socio-cultural deprivation stresses the fact that the child itself is "deprived" through lack of the cultural references which are necessary for success at school. This theory of "deficit" has given rise to a whole series of "compensation" or "remedial" educational projects aimed at compensating for the cultural "deficit" of the child through stimulating activities. This is the case with the huge compensatory educational programmes[51] or educational support projects such as the organisation of homework classes and educational resource centres. It is also the case with educational projects aimed at making good the educational "deficits" of parents.

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47 See ESPERET E., Langage et origine sociale des élèves. (Language and the social background of pupils). Editions Peter Lang, Berne, 1979.

48 BERNSTEIN B., Langage et classes sociales, codes sociolinguistiques et contrôle social. (Language and social classes, socio-linguistic codes and social control). Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1975.

49 LABOV W., Sociolinguistique. (Socio-linguistics). Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1976.
OLERON P., Langage et développement mental. (Language and mental development). Editions Mardaga, Brussels,1978.

50 BISSERET N., Les inégaux de la sélection universitaire. (The inequalities of university selection). Editions P.U.F., Paris, 1974.
BOUDON R., L'inégalité des chances. La mobilité sociale dans les sociétés industrielles. (Unequal opportunities. Social mobility in industrialized societies). Editions Armand Colin, Paris, 1973.

51 These programmes stress cognitive and socio-affective development in order to compensate for the socio-cultural deprivation of children coming from disavantaged backgrounds or ethnic minorities. A typical example is the Head Start programme designed in the United States in the 1960s, which introduced large-scale compensatory educational projects aimed at pre-school children between the ages of 2 and 4.

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Thus, although it breaks with the genetic explanation of failure at school, the socio-cultural deprivation theory, continues to attribute the main responsibility for failure to the pupil and his family. This theory has been severely criticised in that it refers to a single and universal corpus of knowledge against which the pupils and their backgrounds are assessed. "From an acknowledgement of social inequality in the area of cultural goods or the acquisition of knowledge, a negative and elitist judgement is made on the cultural and intellectual level of certain social groups (fewer skills and less know-how, cultural and cognitive defects or deficits)"[52].

The concept of socio-cultural deprivation has above all been evoked in the case of the failure at school of immigrant children. For a time seen as "a symbol of the maximum gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged groups, between the socio-cultural domains of the educationally damned and the chosen", these children are the products of a dual culture which is considered a factor in failure at school, and a handicap throughout life at school. The official position is to disparage the culture of origin while at the same time considering it as a necessary support for acceding to the culture of the host country. The children straddle the culture of origin and the culture of the host country which is transmitted in particular by the school. Both cultures are then seen as two independent and external systems which oppose each other through the child. This ignores the fact that the child "takes part in, and partakes of, both cultures, each one being worked upon from the inside by the other"[53]. The child places landmarks in them and gives a meaning to the world.

In reality, these analyses of failure at school in terms of deprivation are to a large extent based on theories of reproduction which argue, as we will see, in terms of differences.

C. REPRODUCTION SOCIOLOGY

These theories stress the repressive, selective and reproductive functions of the school. This school of thought develops the idea of the disabling school, because either it does not take account of the values of pupils from the disadvantaged social classes, which leads to a cultural conflict, or its organisation and its mode of internal operation are intended specifically to favour certain social classes, to the detriment of the disadvantaged classes. These theories take various forms.

The reproduction of class relationships (Cultural capital and habitus)

The school reproduces the structure of class relationships and contributes to giving legitimacy to the social hierarchy. "The school... only confirms and reinforces a class habitus"[54, 55]. The theory of the dominant ideology considers social hierarchy as the result of different individual skills, judged by the school, as a neutral institution. In fact, the

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52 CHAUVEAU G., ROGOVAS E., "La construction sociale de l'échec scolaire" (The social construction of failure at school) in Perspectives, No 4, November 1984.

53 CHARLOT B., "Penser l'échec comme événement, penser l'immigration comme histoire" (Consider failure as an event, consider immigration as history) in Migrants-Formation, No 81, June 1990.

54 Definition of habitus in BOURDIEU P., Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, (Outline of a theory of practice), Geneva, Editions Droz, 1972 : "The presentation associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produces habitus, systems of lasting and transferable attitudes, structured structures which are predisposed to operating as structuring structures, that is, as priciples which generate and organize practices and representations which can be objectively adjusted to their end without implying a conscious knowledge of the ends and the express control of the operations necessary to attain them, objectively regulated and regular without however being the product of compliance with rules, and, for all that, collectively orchestrated, without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor of an orchestra."

55 BOURDIEU P., PASSERON J.-C., La reproduction, (Reproduction), Editions de Minuit, 1970.

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norms used by the school correspond to the cultural norms of the dominant class. The school transmits to its children a "cultural capital" which is close to the school's culture, and a body of attitudes with regard to the school, a "habitus" which promotes success at school. Children from disadvantaged background have neither this capital nor this habitus. The world of the school is completely foreign to them, and this leads not only to their exclusion from school, but also to self-excluding behaviour.

This analysis[56] considers that the culture of children from disadvantaged backgrounds conflicts with the culture of the school, which is the culture of the dominant social class. The values, attitudes and cognitive style transmitted by the child's cultural background differ from those of the dominant culture which permit success at school. These children develop attitudes of failure vis-à-vis the world of the school, which appears completely foreign to their value systems.

The reproduction of the capitalist relationships of labour

Some authors, mainly ALTHUSSER, based their views on the concept of "the ideological apparatus of the State"[57] and developed the idea that "the educational apparatus makes its contribution to the reproduction of capitalist production relationships"[58]. The organisation of the school into opposing and watertight networks, the secondary/higher education network and the primary/vocational education network, reflects the capitalist division between manual labour and intellectual work. These networks which in fact transmit a common ideology are aimed at opposed social classes and lead to a division of individuals into those who are exploited and those who exploit.

The correspondence theory

This analysis postulates the existence of some correspondence between the social structure of the education system and the forms of conscience, inter-personal behaviour and personality which the system maintains and reinforces in the pupils. The different levels of education nourish in workers the different levels of the structure of employment and tend to adopt an internal organisation comparable to the organisation found at the various levels of the hierarchical division of labour"[59]. Thus, in post-primary schools, the activities of the pupils are strictly regulated. In business, at the lowest levels the observance of rules is important. Then, at the level of short, post-secondary leaving-certificate training, just as at the middle level in business, activities are more independent and less regulated. Finally, elitist university training aims to develop social relationships which correspond to those existing at the higher level of the business hierarchy.

These three theories attempt to establish a statistical correlation between failure at school and belonging to a specific social group. According to these theories, the education system contributes to the social reproduction of social positions. The differences which are found inside schools are a reflection of social differences. Failure at school is merely a transposition of the inequalities and exclusions found in society. According to the first theory, the difference in terms of cultural capital and habitus is linked to the hierarchy of social positions. According to the second analysis, it is conceived in terms of a division between branches of education and is linked to the capitalist division of labour. Finally, the third theory develops the idea of a differentiation between forms of conscience and behaviour, paralleling the various hierarchical levels in the capitalist organisation of labour.

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56 See, in this connection, OGBU J., Minority Education and Caste. New York and London, Academic Press, 1978.

57 ALTHUSSER L., "Idéologies et appareils idéologiques d'Etat" (Ideologies and State ideological apparatus) in La Pensée, No 151, June 1970.

58 BAUDELOT CH., ESTABLET R., L'école capitaliste en France. (Capitalist education in France). Editions Maspero, 1971.

59 BOWLES S., GINTIS H., Schooling in Capitalist America. New York, Basic Books, 1976.

There is however a major risk in the dogmatic assertion that failure at school originates in the home, the background or the socio-cultural surroundings and to conclude too simplistically that success or failure at school is socially, rather than genetically, determined. The risk is all the greater if the only solution proposed in these theories is to reform the school and society as a whole; these theories do not leave any room for measures affecting the practices of all those involved in the education sphere.

D. THE RELATIONSHIP TO LEARNING

According to this theory, which has its origins in "micro-sociology", the challenge is to explain the individual failure (or success) of people who belong very largely to the same social groups. In fact, the statistical correlation between social origin and educational career does not enable success or failure to be predicted with certainty.

The main thrust of this theory is the degree of importance which the individual gives to educational success and learning. "Young people are not specimens acted upon by a determining, external, socio-cultural environment. It can only exert influence through the personal and social ideas which all individuals develop for themselves over a lifetime..."[60] and "...every history is unique"[61]. The relationship the youngster develops with the school, school work and the world of work has its own specific character.

The individual is therefore not just the simple incarnation of a social group nor the product of environmental influences. The fact of living in a poor estate or a residential suburb certainly is not without its effects on the child's history and educational future. Consequently, "knowing the background can help us to understand the situations children will have to tackle and to manage the resources available to them to do it"[62].

Understanding why a child succeeds or fails at school means first asking whether or not the child is working. Next, the question to deal with is why the child is not working and in particular to try to understand what "working" means to pupils. As CHARLOT and his colleagues indicate[63], for some pupils, "working" at school is not synonymous with learning. Consequently, "one cannot be sure that the child who works at school will necessarily succeed."

The key question is ultimately to analyse and understand the meaning pupils and teachers, with their individual life-experience, give to what goes on in school. Even if the relationship to learning which each develops is marked by social relationships, it cannot be defined or deduced simply from the fact that the individual belongs to a particular social class.

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60 CHARLOT B., "Penser l'échec comme événement, penser l'immigration comme histoire"(Think of failure as an event, think of immigration as history), Migrants-Formation, No 81, June 1990, p. 16.

61 CHARLOT B., BAUTIER E., ROCHESE, J-Y, Ecoles et savoir dans les banlieues ... et ailleurs (School and knowledge in the suburds ... and elswhere), Collection Formation des enseignants, Paris, Armand Collin, 1993.

62 CHARLOT B., op. cit., p. 16.

63 CHARLOT B., op. cit.

E. THE INTERACTIONIST MOVEMENT

How does failure at school develop? This question is at the centre of the research of the interactionist movement. It is mainly concerned with what happens inside the school. "More importance is attached to the personal, subjective construction of events by teachers and pupils, than to the views of sociologists on these events, and [...interactionism...] attaches prime importance to the process of attributing meaning and definition to the situation"[64].

This movement attempts to analyse the concrete day-to-day mechanisms which lead to failure at school through the interaction of the various parties involved in education. In other words, it is a question of showing the social and relational processes in the "child-background-school" triangle. "Failure at school is seen as a concrete set of unequal relationships which lead to being at the bottom or marginalised and to developing inappropriate learning strategies"[65].

The theoretical convergence of approaches with different methodological origins and traditions should be stressed here. French micro-sociology coincides with the conclusions of the ethnographic approach which is essentially British. In the educational sciences, investigators studying interactions in class have recently developed an "ecological" approach. Research into assessment practice also uses an interactionist approach.

Teachers' expectations and interactions in class

Teachers have expectations and images of themselves and their pupils. The teacher, in fact, is not culturally neutral. His professional experience and his socio-cultural background greatly influence his expectations and his image of the ideal pupil. Teachers will rate highest those pupils who come closest to these and penalise those who depart from them through gestures and verbal and written attitudes which are quickly internalised. "The disparagement affects the individual intimately in his self-image"[66]. This analysis develops the "Pygmalion" theme and stresses how the expectations of teachers can affect the educational behaviour of pupils.

The importance of oral language in school and the influence of pupils' oral participation on their success at school has been the subject of many studies. The way language is used in school greatly influences the pupil's school behaviour. Some pupils readily participate actively, others are more withdrawn.

A study has been carried out on communication networks in primary classes by setting out the basic principle that "verbal interaction cannot be analysed independently of the content of what is communicated and, more precisely, of the cultural and institutional referents". In effect, "The actors do not develop solely and strictly autonomously in the school setting but come complete with a socially-modelled identity"[67].

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64 WOODS P., The divided School, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

65 CHAUVEAU G. et ROGOVAS E., "La construction sociale de l'échec scolaire" (The social construction of failure at school), Perspectives, No 4, November 1984.

66 LURCAT L., L'échec et le désintérêt scolaire à l'école primaire. (Failure and educational disinterest in primary schools). Editions Cerf, Paris, 1976.

67 SIROTA R., L'école primaire au quotidien. (Primary school from day to day). Editions P.U.F., 1988.

The conclusions of this research stress the withdrawn and "wait-and-see" character of the behaviour of working class children, without however concluding that they lack interest in what is going on in the classroom. The children of those in lower management are better integrated, irrespective of their ability level. The children of upper management and the liberal professions participate well.

"Ecological" research has shown that the essence of classroom activity is the exchange of work for marks or status[68], an exchange which differs from one class to the other. "The cognitive skills necessary for learning in a particular branch of education are not sufficient for success"[69]. Strategies must also be mastered to enable all the demands of the environment to be understood and action to be taken. This has implications in particular for choosing between the single teacher and team-teaching patterns of education.

The considerable influence of classroom conditions and habits on education has also been well documented[70]. Being an excellent pupil is frequently a question of knowing how to use superficial indications to carry out a task, rather than having real knowledge. These strategic skills are an asset enabling the pupil, in particular in situations of assessment, "...to be able to assess the importance of the test...to be able quickly to gauge the difficulty of questions...to be able to turn to good account what one knows...to be able to negotiate the correction, the marking..."[71].

Methods of assessment

Recent work has shown the key role of assessment procedures and their direct or indirect implications for the rest of the educational process.

Assessment as usually practised in the classroom is open to various criticisms. Not only is this assessment, in most cases, summative and normative, but the reliability and validity of the marks given to the pupils have also been called into question by many investigators. Studies have compared the marks given by teachers to the pupils in their respective classes and the scores obtained by these same pupils in a standardised test[72]. There is wide discrepancy between the marks and the scores. Even if pupils in one class are correctly assessed relative to each other, the teacher is incorrectly translating in their marks the actual standard of the pupils in the class as compared to the standards of other classes[73]. The teacher also tends to overestimate the differences in ability between the pupils in the class. "Good" pupils in one class may be considered bad in another class and, vice-versa, pupils who are objectively above average may be failed simply because they are the weakest in their class.

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68 BECKER H.S., GEER B., HUGUES E., Making the grade: the academic side of college life. Wiley, New York, 1968.

69 DOYLE W., "Paradigmes de recherche sur l'efficacité des enseignants" (Paradigms of research on the effectiveness of teachers), p. 461, 1986 in CRAHAY M., LAFONTAINE D. (Eds) L'art et la science de l'enseignement. (The art and science of teaching). Editions Labor, Bruxelles, 1986, pp. 435-483.
MEHAN H., Learning lessons, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1979, p. 133.

70 PERRENOUD P., "De quoi la réussite scolaire est-elle faite ?". (What is the recipe for success at school?). Education et Recherche, I, pp. 33-60, 1986.

71 PERRENOUD P., ibid, p. 27.

72 GRISAY A., "Les mirages de l'évaluation scolaire. Rendement en français, notes et échecs à l'école primaire" (The mirage of educational assessment. Work in French, marks and failure in the primary school). Revue de la Direction Générale de l'Organisation des Etudes, Bruxelles, 1984.

73 This illustrates the law of Posthumus whereby "a teacher tends to adjust the level of his teaching and his assessment of the performance of pupils so as to conserve, from year to year, approximately the same distribution of marks" quoted by DE LANDSHEERE G., Evaluation continue et examens. Précis de docimologie. (Continuous assessments and examinations. Precis of docimology), Editions Labor, Brussels, 1980, p. 224.

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Thus assessment in itself often turns out to be unfair, and may be the cause of failure at school. "Assessment is traditionally associated, in school, with the establishment of hierarchies of excellence. Pupils are ranked according to a standard of excellence defined absolutely or personified by the teacher and the best pupils.... The one thing marks have in common is that they give information on the position of a pupil in the group, or relative to the norm of excellence, rather than on the actual knowledge of the pupil"[74]. Furthermore the system of marking is distorted by the fact that the marks are used as rewards and punishments. Anyway, they do not tell the pupil how to make progress.

Thus there is a need for better integration of assessment into the learning process. Although intended as a series of progressive adjustments, assessment is becoming a prime learning tool by influencing the process as much as the results. The parties involved in the educational community must familiarise themselves with the formative and diagnostic use of assessment. However, "genuine formative assessment is necessarily linked to differentiated assistance, with all that that implies in terms of teaching methods, adjustments to the timetable, organisation of the class, and even radical changes to school structures"[75].

Learning conditions

Overall, inappropriate assessment of pupils is among the worst learning conditions provided by schools. These conditions "accentuate the differences in pupils' abilities and rates of learning, and their motivation for later learning"[76]. Research carried out in this area has given rise to the emergence of methods of differentiated learning, including mastery-learning, aimed at educational success for all. The basic premise of this learning is that all pupils are capable of reaching a high level of mastery, provided that they are given the opportunity and suitable conditions and that their learning rhythms are respected[77].

This teaching requires the learning objectives to be clarified and calls for regular diagnostic and formative assessment which ensures feedback on the progress made in learning. Various corrective exercises complement this. Noticeable improvements have been recorded, in particular among the weakest pupils, who tended to be side-lined in traditional education.

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74 PERRENOUD P., "L'évaluation entre hier et demain" (Assessment between yesterday and tomorrow) in Coordination, No 35, Lausanne, 1989, p. 3.

75 PERRENOUD P., op. cit., p. 4.
On the question of assessment, see in particular: DE LANDSHEERE G., op. cit.
ALLAL L., CARDINET J., PERRENOUD P., L'évaluation formative dans un enseignement différencié, (Formative assessment in differentiated teaching), Lang, Berne, 1979.
BLOOM B., HASTINGS J.P., MADAUS G.F., Formative and summative evaluation of student learning, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1973.

76 BLOOM B., Caractéristiques individuelles et apprentissages scolaires, (Individual characteristics and learning at school), Editions Labor, Nathan, 1979, p. 10.

77 see BLOOM B., op. cit.
CARROLL J.B., A model for school learning, Teachers College Record, 1963.
HUBERMAN M., Assurer la réussite des apprentissages scolaires, (Ensuring the success of school learning), Editions Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel-Paris, 1988.

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PART III

ACTION IN RESPONSE TO FAILURE AT SCHOOL

Examination of the theories explaining failure at school shows that each favours a particular remedial approach. The genetic theories naturally lead to selective education based on streaming and attainment tests. Consideration of the psycho-affective aspect of failure at school leads to individualised support education.

The theories based on socio-cultural factors favour compensatory education targeted at "high risk groups". These are best illustrated by the designation of Educational Priority Areas in France and Belgium (and equivalent arrangements in other Member States). Those theories which dismantle the strictly educational mechanisms which result in failure recommend positive and integrated action to remedy this failure.

In practice, discussion of and forms of intervention to combat failure at school are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by these various concepts which are interwoven with the underlying, and often contradictory, ethical and political principles of the society in question. In fact, the problem of failure at school impinges on the social, cultural, economic and political areas as well as that of education and calls in question some fundamental choices made by society. These questions refer back in general to the various changes which have taken place in the education systems as a whole.

The post-war demographic explosion considerably increased the social demand for education in western countries throughout the sixties. The process of democratising education, which went hand in hand with the raising of the school-leaving age and a significant increase in the proportion of children in full-time education, gave rise to a wide-ranging debate on equality - equality of conditions, of opportunity and of results. The problem then arose as to how an education system adapted to a privileged minority could be changed into a system in which all could achieve educational success. This period has seen the rapid rise of types of compensatory education.

The end of the period of economic growth, followed by an increase in unemployment among young people and falling birthrates, has led to budgetary cutbacks in educational spending. These new constraints have resulted in greater attention being paid to better management of systems of education. Most Member States have therefore introduced a number of reforms to adapt their education systems to the new set of circumstances and to improve them, thereby attempting to solve some of the problems connected with failure at school.

From many points of view, there are similarities in the diversity of the means used to attain these objectives. The "European education area" appears to be an important framework, within its limitations, to promote the emergence of synergies in order the better to tackle the phenomenon of failure at school and beyond that, to combat the danger of exclusion. This is a challenge not only at national level, but also at the level of European construction, if this construction is to be given a human face.

The action taken raises the more general problem of the effectiveness of the education systems. This question is at the heart of the reforms implemented by Member States and has been the subject of much research and many international projects. A summary of the principal areas of research in this field is therefore given here. In the following chapter, the specific measures introduced by Member States to eradicate failure at school and to enable young people to take up quality education are analysed.

A. HOW CAN THE SCHOOL BECOME EFFECTIVE? - AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESEARCH

At present, the subject of analysis and the scene of most research is shifting more and more to the school, in order to gain a better understanding of its operation and the influence which it exerts on pupils. The school is considered the principal agent of change for pupils, hence the attempt to improve the operation of the school by modifying the teaching and learning processes rather than attempting to reform the school as a whole.

This new type of strategy is based on the concept of school effectiveness. This concept is of major practical importance for educational policies. It should however be pointed out that there is no single definition of the effective school, since this varies according to trends in research and in the Member States. According to a number of research projects, "school is effective in so far as it accomplishes what it sets out to do"[78]. This definition presupposes analysis of the range of objectives set for the school. In view of the complexity of these objectives, most research in this area has covered only a limited number of objectives, and in particular the objective of the educational success of the pupils. It is a question of knowing how to make the school more effective, that is to say, how it can help all pupils to be successful.

This question gave rise to a "Movement for effective schools", particularly in the United States, which was concerned about improving the educational results of pupils in schools where the majority of pupils were from low-income ethnic minorities. It also gave rise to two major research movements.

1. INPUT-OUTPUT RESEARCH

This type of research is aimed at identifying the characteristics of the entry points of the education systems (available resources, characteristics of the school, educational methods, teachers) which have positive links with the educational results of the pupils at the exit points. This research is generally based on large samples. The overall finding is that school variables proper have a limited influence on educational results, at least in economically developed countries.

The major transnational studies of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Results (I.E.A.) - the survey of results in mathematics (1966); "six subject survey" in science, reading comprehension, literature, English and French as foreign languages and civics (1972/74) and "reading literacy" (1989/93) fall within the context of this movement.

Of the representative research of this movement, reference should be made to the Coleman report[79], in the United States, on equal access to education. The report concluded that the resources made available to pupils in the schools had little influence on the educational results of the pupils. Factors such as the family background of the pupils and the characteristics of the other pupils attending the school played a comparatively greater role.

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78 MADAUS G., AIRASIAN P., KELLAGHAN T., School effectiveness: a reassessment of the evidence, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1980, p. 66.

79 COLEMAN J. et al., Equality and educational opportunity, US Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1966.

The report's methodology and conclusions have since been severely criticised[80], in particular because the specific organisation of the school, and the manner in which resources were used, were not taken into consideration.

More recent research has examined the "means of production" in education, namely the relation between resources and results, modelled on the criteria applied in economics. This work shows that there is no obvious correlation between production factors, such as teacher-pupil ratios, teacher training or experience, and the educational results of the pupils[81].

In conclusion, large-scale input-output studies have not led to the identification of factors with an obvious correlation with the results of the pupils. This corpus of research did not take account of what was happening inside the school and the classroom, the basic approach of subsequent research.

2. THE ECOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

Ecological-type research requires groups of schools, whether or not considered outstanding, to be observed in a thorough and systematic way, in order to identify the factors contributing to their effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

A study covering the evaluation of pupils' progress in reading in a given context has brought to light a number of common characteristics which are conducive to learning, in particular the positive expectations of the teachers vis-à-vis the pupils and the dynamism of the head teacher[82]. These characteristics have also been noted in subsequent research[83].

The research considered the most relevant in this field has stressed criteria of success other than educational results, such as truancy rates and delinquency. It concluded that there was a positive effect from a combination of specific factors on the results of schools, including homework, the positive expectations of teachers, giving pupils responsibility (personal guidance, participation in meetings, etc.)[84].

A summary of the work carried out in this field[85] suggests, rather than confirms, that some variables in structure and practice have a systematic correlation with the results of the pupils. Thirteen major factors linked to the effectiveness of education have been singled out and divided into two categories:

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80 In this connection, see MADAUS et al., op. cit.

81 HANUSHEK E., The economics of schooling: production and efficiency in public schools in Journal of Economic Literature, September 1986.

82 WEBER G., Inner-city children can be taught to read: four successful schools, Washington, D.C., Council for Basic Education, 1971.

83 BROODOVER W.B., BEADY C., FLOOD P., SCHWEITZER J., WISENBAKER J., School social systems and student achievement: schools can make a difference, New York, Praeger, 1979.

84 RUTTER M., MAUGHAN B., MORTIMORE P., OUSTON J., SMITH A., Fifteen thousand hours : secondary schools and their effects on children, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1979.

85 PURKEY S.C., SMITH M.S., Effective Schools: a review in Elementary School Journal, March 1983, 83 (4), pp. 427 - 452.

- **structural variables:** self-management of the school, head teacher, stability of staff, preparation and organisation of curricula, the school's image and educational success, optimum use of the time devoted to learning and support from the local area.

- **variables of practice:** consultation and staff relations, sense of community, clarity of objectives.

Various projects have been set up to introduce into the school innovations intended to improve effectiveness. We shall refer mainly to two types of projects[86].

a) Innovative projects based on a typical example of a successful school[87], identified by five characteristics:

. a head who is strong and attentive to the quality of learning;
. the staff as a whole focusing on teaching;
. a climate of order and security conducive to work;
. teachers' behaviour indicating that they expect each pupil to have at least a minimum degree of self-control;
. a monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching based on pupils' results.

The Rise Project (1979), in the United States, had as its objective an improvement of the output of some primary schools in which results were negative. Several aims were set: to increase the sense of professional responsibility of the teachers, to develop remedial work in the classroom, accompanied by work in small groups for very weak pupils, to enhance the cohesion of the educational environment, etc. After three years of implementation, the results of the project showed better results in mathematics and in reading in certain schools, but little or no progress in half of the schools.

The School Improvement Project (SIP) was aimed at a number of very disadvantaged schools in New York (1979). The objectives were to improve administrative practices, the school atmosphere, the methods for assessing pupils, the expectations of the teachers and the focusing of their efforts on the acquisition of basic skills by pupils. After two years of implementation of the project, there was an improvement in 60% of the participating schools. The research workers involved in the project[88] stressed that the effective involvement of the head teacher and the teachers in the projects, and the support of the parents had a considerable impact on school performance.

Both experiments illustrate the difficulty of achieving real improvements in ineffective schools. According to some researchers, it is preferable to help them first of all to be effective in their daily work in order to create better conditions for real innovation[89].

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86 See the report of GRISAY A. Pour un parcours scolaire sans ratés : Du mythe de la bonne école à la réalité (fuyante) de l'école efficace. (For an education without failure : from the myth of the good school to the (elusive) reality of the efficient school), Service de pédagogie expérimentale de l'Université de Liège, 1988.

87 EDMONDS R.R. East Lansing: Michigan State University, Center for School Improvement, 1982, unpublished working document quoted by GOOD and BROPHY "School effects" in WITTROCK M.C. (ed.), Handbook of Research on Teaching, New York, Macmillan, pp. 570-601, 1986.

88 CLARK T.A., Mc CARTHY D.P., School improvement in "New York City: the evolution of a project" in Educational Researcher, 12(4), pp. 17 - 24.

89 GOODLAD J., A place called school: prospects for the future, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1983.

b) The international project on the improvement of the operation of schools (ISIP, 1982/86)

Launched by the OECD Centre for Research and Innovation in Education, this project involved fourteen countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, Sweden and Switzerland). The work was carried out through international groups entrusted with specific subjects including self-analysis of the school, head teachers and internal agents of change in the process of improving the operation of the school, etc.

The improvement in the operation of the school is understood as "a systematic and sustained effort aimed at changing, in one or more schools, teaching conditions and other related internal conditions, the ultimate aim being to attain more effectively the objectives of education"[90].

In-depth work has been carried out in real situations such as:

- the *MAVO* reform in the Netherlands, aimed at supporting national individualisation measures in secondary education;
- school self-analysis in secondary schools in France;
- the Guidelines for Review and Internal Development in Schools (GRIDS) pilot project launched by the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom, aimed at the preparation and assessment of self-analysis material for schools;
- school self-analysis, by a study circle, of subjects defined by the school in Denmark;
- the reform of primary education in Belgium launched in September 1973.

On the basis of these examples of innovation, researchers selected a number of principles to be observed to make schools more efficient, in particular the consideration to be given to the general background, the importance of the school itself as a centre of strategic reflection, and the essential place of teachers', head teachers', pupils', and parents' action in this context.

The conclusions of the ISIP work specifically covering school self-analysis[91] show that this practice is a necessary condition for improving the operation of the school. However, to be satisfactory, this self-analysis must be based on external support in the form of consultation, training or any other form of assistance for the implementation of the change or the quality objectives expected.

The work has moreover underlined the importance of the head teachers in improving the operation of the school, provided that they have a clear view of the objectives to be attained and that they have been trained for this purpose[92].

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90 VAN VELZEN W.G. and others, Parvenir à une amélioration effective du fonctionnement de l'école, (Achieving an effective improvement in the operation of the school), OECD-ISIP, Editions Economica, 1988, p. 54.

91 HOPKINS D., BOLLEN R., La pratique de l'auto-analyse de l'établissement scolaire, (The practice of school self-analysis) OECD-ISIP, Editions Economica, Paris, 1988.

92 STEGO N.E. and others, Le rôle des chefs d'établissement dans l'amélioration du fonctionnement de l'école, (The role of the head in improving the operation of the school), OECD-ISIP, Editions Economica, Paris 1988;

HOPES C., Le chef d'établissement et l'amélioration du fonctionnement de l'école - études de cas de dix pays de l'OCDE, (The head and improvements in the operation of the school - case studies of ten OECD coutries) OECD-ISIP, Editions Economica, Paris, 1988.

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Other work has also highlighted the essential role of the head teacher[93]. The main characteristics of efficient headship include the following[94]:

- centring the school's objectives on teaching, by developing criteria of success and positive expectations of pupils;
- getting to know what is going on in the classes;
- creating a feeling of belonging to the school community;
- protecting the school's independence;
- managing the time available, in particular in order to permit consultation with teaching staff, etc.

CONCLUSION

Most of this research has led to lists of criteria of effectiveness being drawn up and has implied that their adoption would produce results in all schools. Furthermore, no indications have been given regarding the combination, coordination and adjustment of these criteria in order to improve the operation of schools[95].

It should be stated that most of this research made use of educational results, through standardised tests in one or two subjects, as a measure of school effectiveness.

More recent work carried out in the United Kingdom[96] has however gone further than cognitive criteria and has in particular measured pupils' progress in regular attendance, behaviour, self-image and attitude towards the school. This study stressed the need to take account of the pupil factor in measuring the effectiveness of the school and to have a good understanding of the school's practices and culture when thinking of improving its operation.

Little research has been carried out into the interaction between pupil ability and measures introduced to improve school effectiveness of the school. Some research carried out in the French Community of Belgium has nevertheless shown that criteria of effectiveness vary depending on the social composition of the school[97].

Research into the effectiveness of schools would appear to be a promising area, but it has not yet lived up to expectations. The most recent work, which is moving in the direction of an extension of the concept of effectiveness to include areas other than the cognitive area and towards research into the interactions between criteria of effectiveness and the social make-up of the school, should, in the next few years, lead to the development of more finely adjusted approaches better suited to the diversity of schools.

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93 STALLING J., MOHLMAN G., School policy, leadership style, teacher change and student behavior in eight schools, Final report, Grant No. NIE-G-80-0010, Washington, D.C., National Institute of Education, September 1981.
DWYER D.C., LEE G.V., ROWAN B., BOSSERT S.T., The principal's role in instructional management : five participant observation studies of principals in action, San Francisco, Far West Laboratory, 1982.

94 COHEN M., Instructional, management and social conditions in effective schools in WEBB A.O., WEBB L.D., School finance and school improvement : linkages in the 1980's, Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger, 1983.

95 For an analysis of work on the effectiveness of teaching see BROPHY J., GOOD TH.L., Teacher behavior and student achievement in WITROCK M. Edition Handbook of research on teaching, New York, Mc Millan, 1986.
For a review of work on this subject in Great Britain, see REYNOLDS D., School effectiveness and Improvement : A Review of the British Literature, annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990.

96 MORTIMORE P., SAMMONS P., STOLL L., LEWIS D., ECOB R., School matters : the junior Years, Opens Book, Somerset, 1988; Study undertaken on behalf of the Inner London Education Authority.

97 GRISAY A., op. cit.

B. SPECIFIC MEASURES TO COMBAT FAILURE AT SCHOOL

Measures in this area vary a great deal. Some action is taken in a non-school context, in other social sectors (child employment, social services, socio-economic sector, occupational integration, etc.).

As regards the measures directly linked to the education system, some are of a structural nature and influence either the general framework of the school (the school year, the extension of compulsory education, the internal structure, etc.), or the organisation of education (flexibility of curricula, assessment, guidance, etc.).

Others measures are aimed specifically at those involved in education - the school (independence, strengthening of the role of the head teacher, partnership, etc.), the teachers (training, links with the local area, teaching and assessment methods, etc.), the family (increased participation in the education of their child and in the management of the school, etc.), the pupil (stimulation of learning, support, assessment, guidance, placement in industry, etc.).

These strategies, which have been implemented to various degrees in the Member States of the European Community, are intended to give priority to preventing failure at school, rather than remedying it, which is much more difficult and less satisfactory in its long-term results.

We describe below some of the major types of action taken to combat failure at school in the European Community as a whole.

1. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Although nobody today doubts the beneficial effect on the child of education from early childhood, differences of view nevertheless persist between the Member States of the European Community on the manner in which it can contribute most effectively to developing and improving the chances of success at school.

The meeting of Senior Education Officials of the Member States of the European Community which was held in Brussels in June 1992 underlined the differing views on the education of the young child. The representatives of the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany and Denmark placed greater emphasis on the socialising role of pre-school education. On the other hand, the importance of acquiring pre-learning skills at this stage, in addition to socialisation, is a principle which tends to be shared by Member States such as Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Luxembourg. It should be noted that there is a tendency at present everywhere in Europe to try to find a happy medium between the objectives of socialisation and learning.

The role assigned to pre-school education therefore differs according to the Member State concerned. What is the situation of pre-school education in the Member States?

Pre-school attendance in the Member States

	AGE CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION				
		2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs
B	2 1/2 to 6 years (nursery school)	1989/90 *				
		-	90 %	97 %	100 %	100 %
DK	*Vuggestuer* (day child-minding facilities), 0 to 3 years, *Børnehaver* (nursery school) 3 to 7 years, *Børnhaveklasser* (nursery classes), 5 to 7 years	1992 ****				
			56.7 %	76 %	76 %	98 %
D	3 to 6 years (*Kindergarten*) 1)	1991: average 67.9 % ****				
GR	3 1/2 to 5 1/2 years (*Nypiagogeia*)	1989 **				
		-	-	60 %	99 %	
E	*Educación Infantil* (two cycles from 0-3 years and 3-6 years)	1988: average 45.7 % ***				
F	2-4 years: lower nursery school 4-5 years: middle nursery school 5-6 years: upper nursery school	1992 ****				
		34 %	90 %	100 %	100 %	-
IRL	No official pre-school education - possibility of being enrolled in the National School from age 4 (compulsory education starts at age 6)	1987 *				
				55 %	100 %	
I	3 to 5 years, in nursery schools	1987 *				
				87.3 %		
L	4 to 6 years	1987 *				
				90 %	100 %	
NL	No official system but there are play groups for under 4-year-olds managed by private associations or by some local authorities	1991 ****				
				99.2 %	100 %	100 %
P	*Jardins de Infancia* from 3 to 6 years	1991/92 ****				
			28.8 %	46.8 %	66.6 %	
UK	No official system but depending on the LEA 3 to 5-year-old children can attend nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools.	1988: average of 45.3 %, including 24% part-time***				

Sources: * Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the Member States of the European Community. EURYDICE and CEDEFOP, 1990.

** L'échec scolaire est-il une fatalité?, (Is failure at school inevitable?) R. RIVIERE, collection Education Actualité, Ed. Hatier, Paris, 1991.

*** Education at a glance, OECD, 1992.

**** Relevant Education Ministry.

1) These statistics relate only to *Kindergarten* attendance. The other pre-school establishments for 5-year-olds (*Vorklassen*) and for 6-year-olds who have reached school age but are not yet mature (*Schulkindergarten*) are not included. The numbers are not statistically significant. The rate of 67.9% represents the proportion of 3 to 6-year-olds attending a *Kindergarten* in the "old *Länder*".

Some countries attach importance to pre-school education for the very young. This is the case in France and Belgium which have attendance rates of 30% for 2-year-olds and over 90% for 3-year-olds. It is also the case in Spain which, since the 1990 education reform (LOGSE), has organised pre-school education as a separate level of education, for the very young. The aim is to permit over 20% of children to attend a nursery school from the age of 3.

In most Member States, the rates of attendance in pre-school education are approximately 60% for those over 4 years of age. Portugal has limited provision for the 3 - 5 age group, while public and private enterprise pre-school education involved only 29% of children in January 1990, and 47.7% in 1991/92.

Attendance at a nursery school or kindergarten is optional in all Member States, except Luxembourg where it is compulsory from the age of 4.

On the other hand, some Member States do not make any official provision for a national pre-school education system. This is the case in Ireland where existing services are essentially voluntary. In 1987/88, the Irish Pre-school Playgroups Association had 1501 groups catering for the pre-school education of 20 774 children. It must however be stated that National Schools can admit children from the age of 4 to the Infant Classes of the primary department, that is, two years prior to compulsory education.

In the Netherlands, since 1 August 1985, there is no longer any official pre-school education organised by the Ministry; this has been integrated into primary education (which therefore begins at the age of 4 but is not compulsory until the age of 5). Child-minding facilities or playgroups which exist for the under 4-year-olds are managed by private bodies or by local authorities. The provision made for 4-year-olds is however adapted to their age.

In the United Kingdom, the Local Education Authorities have complete discretion whether or not to organise pre-school education for the under 5-year-olds (with the exception of 2 to 5-year-olds with special educational needs). Where provided, this may be in grant-aided nursery schools, in nursery classes attached to primary schools or in the reception classes of primary schools. There is also a high degree of private initiative in this field.

The specific task assigned pre-school education is undeniably linked to the cultural context, which determines the organisation of the education system, and also depends on the basic notion of the position given to the child within the family and the school.

Pre-school education: socialisation and development of the child

In all the Member States, pre-school education provides opportunity for the child's socialisation and development, in particular through the importance attached to play and early learning activities.

Some Member States expressly stress its role as a complement to education and family life. This is true in particular of the *børnehaver* in Denmark and the *Kindergarten* in Germany where children do not receive any formal teaching.

Although there has been education in Danish nursery classes under their 1985 Act (No 270), this takes the form of games and developmental activities, in which the child gets to know school life with other children. Pre-school classes or the school *Kindergarten* attached to the primary school in some German *Länder* set out above all to develop the interest of the child

in the school, without providing formal teaching as such. Ireland, which in principle has no pre-school education, has however introduced a special pre-school education programme in reading and mathematics for travellers' children as a special category.

In Italy, the act of 1968, which was in force until the Ministerial Decree of June 1991, expressly stipulated that the object of the nursery school should be to give children their first basic learning skills and to complement the educational efforts of the parents in order to avoid imbalance and social maladjustment. The current provisions, while acknowledging that the nursery school is an educational establishment in its own right, stress its close links with education in the family.

These observations lead to the conclusion that some Member States share the feeling that the education of the young child is above all the responsibility of the family. These Member States typically have a common cultural tradition which sets great store by the educational role of the family. Any structures set in place by the State or by private bodies are limited to the socialisation of the child and early learning games, but are not given the task of educating the child.

Pre-school education and first steps in learning

Pre-school education in Europe has also been influenced by another concept of early childhood, which is considered to be a particularly appropriate moment to start learning. This view of childhood is held particularly in France which, since an act of 16 June 1881, set up the nursery school as a genuine educational establishment. This is also the case in Belgium, since 1880, Italy, Spain, Greece, Luxembourg and Portugal.

In Spain, however, there has been a change of direction under the *LOGSE*, emphasis being placed on socialising the child rather than on activities aimed strictly at its intellectual development.

In general, in these Member States, pre-school education is an integral part of the education system; although this has long been the case in France and Belgium, it is a more recent development in Spain, under the 1970 act on general education and the financing of educational reform (LGE), and in Italy since 1991.

In this educational context, pre-school education has the task of ensuring not only the child's socialisation and development, but also preparation of the child for the later stages of education. (In France, the higher nursery classes as well as the preparatory course and the first year of the elementary course[98] are part of the "initial learning cycle".) The school must foster intellectual development, through mathematical, scientific and language activities, through various types of learning adapted to the age group (in Belgium, Italy and Spain, etc.), in the context of the much wider objectives of primary education (as in Luxembourg and Greece). We should also note that some nursery schools are bilingual - in Brittany, the Basque Country, Alsace in France, and the Valle d'Aosta in Italy.

Pre-school education and failure at school

The aforementioned Member States' belief that pre-school education promotes educational success is based on the conclusions of many research projects. This research, based on statistics, has demonstrated the positive influence of pre-school education and of its continued

98 Decree No 90-788 of 6 June 1990 on the organization and operation of elementary nursery schools.

effect on later education[99]. Pre-school education also permits the early detection of any problems the pupil may have, and for this reason it is a tool in the prevention of failure at school. Some Member States also explicitly acknowledge in their legislation its decisive influence on the course of a child's education.

For instance, the report annexed to the French framework act of 10 July 1989 states that the nursery school, "has an obvious role to play in helping the most disadvantaged children at the threshold of learning". The objective which has been set is to encourage pupils to learn and to develop behaviour and attitudes conducive to their future education. In this context, France has made a major investment in developing facilities for two-year-old pupils, particularly those coming from disadvantaged social groups. The law provides that "the admission of 2-year-old children is extended as a priority to schools situated in socially disadvantaged areas, whether these areas are urban, rural or mountainous".

It is also with a view to preventing failure at school that Spain and Portugal have, since the reforms of their education system (*LOGSE* in 1990 and the 1986 act on the basis of the education system respectively), been making major efforts to increase access to pre-school education.

Portugal has emphasised the quantitative aspect, in view of its major shortfall in this area, by creating new structures (between 1987 and 1988, 413 nursery schools were set up) and additional teaching posts for pre-school education (the figure of 5360 posts has been proposed for 1993). In addition, peripatetic teams have been set up at the present time to compensate for the deficit in staff and accommodation. Spain on the other hand provides enough places to meet the demand for education and is continuing its efforts to increase the percentage of children in pre-school education.

The target of pre-school education in Italy, which, since the decree of June 1991[100], is a totally educational institution, goes beyond measures to combat failure at school and includes social exclusion. The legislation stipulates that pre-school education must help children to become "free and responsible individuals who participate actively in the life of the local, national and international community".

Many studies show the beneficial effects of education from a very early age on the child's abilities, in particular in the area of language. Pupils who have attended school from early childhood start primary education with a much higher level of development than the others. It should however be noted that the highest levels of backwardness are recorded in the Member States which favour pre-school education of the "basic learning" type for the very young. France and Belgium still have significant levels of backwardness from the beginning of primary education. This apparently contradictory phenomenon is easily explained by the practice of repeating classes, the educational usefulness of which has however never been demonstrated. On the contrary, many studies carried out in this field have proved its ineffectiveness[101].

The debate on the effect of pre-school education on educational results bring up the general question of the organisation and operation of the education system. The education of very

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99 DURAND-PRINBORGNE C., L'égalité scolaire par le coeur et par la raison. (Educational equality based on sentiment and reason). Editions Nathan, collection "Education", 1988.
GEDREM, Echec et maternelle: avant six ans déjà la sélection. (Failure and the nursery school : selection even before the age of six) Editions Syros, Paris, 1980.
BOUYALA N., ROUSILLE B., "L'enfant dans la vie. Une politique pour la petite enfance" (The child in life. A policy for early childhood), report to the Secretary of State for the Family, Documentation Française, Paris, 1982.

100 Ministerial Decree on "New guidelines for educational activities in the nursery schools of the Sate", 3 June 1991.

101 For a review of literature on this question, see the article of M. CRAHAY, "Echec de l'élève, échec de l'école?"(Pupil failure, school failure?) in Théorie et Pratique, Brussels, 1993.

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young children is justified by the need to inculcate cognitive skills at a very young age, and repeating the year is the sanction for any lacunae in learning. Both these aspects are derived from an identical concept of the school, in which educational strategies give priority to cognitive learning. It should however be pointed out that some of the Member States which promote this type of operation place the child at the centre of their educational philosophy, in their legislation (in France in 1989 and in Spain in 1990).

As regards the organisation of teaching, methodological and teaching criteria are proposed in several Member States. In general, the teacher would appear to have great autonomy in this area, so that account can be taken of each child's pace, as in France, and project teaching can be introduced, as in Belgium.

Although the pre-school education of two-year-olds offers a better cost-benefit return than measures to reduce class sizes in the primary school, according to a recent French study carried out on this subject[102], it would not appear to be of any particular benefit to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Nevertheless, its positive effects can be felt throughout the rest of the pupil's education.

In conclusion, it is important to hold on to the benefits obtained from pre-school education and to ensure that other mechanisms do not neutralise them. It would therefore seem desirable to make an effort to promote a pre-school educational policy which is closely linked to other measures aimed at remedying failure at school, in the overall framework of the organisation of the education system, and with a view to greater consistency in its operation.

2. PARTNERSHIP

In recent years, there has been an increase in partnerships in several sectors of society, a development to which the school has been particularly responsive. The school, which used to carry out its educational and teaching functions in isolation, has recently opened up to the participation and intervention of outside institutions and individuals.

The problem of failure at school and its vital implications are now attracting various efforts to ensure the success of a maximum number of pupils. This has led to a search for synergies with partners both inside and outside the education system.

This opening follows on from a new conception of education which recognises that the school can no longer fulfil its role on its own. It has led to flexibility in methods of operation, in particular with greater autonomy being given to the schools, (not only to the head teacher but also to the teachers), as a necessary condition for the successful implementation of partnership measures.

The danger of a two-speed school has in many Member States elicited inter-partner and inter-institutional reactions which are reflected in slogans such as "educational success is everybody's business" and "let us devote all our energy to the school". In Portugal, the Education For All Programme (*PEPT*), introduced on 16 May 1991, and the Inter-Ministerial Programme to Promote Success at School (*PIPSE*), which ran between 1987 and 1992, promoted partnership, solidarity and cooperation among all those involved in education in

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102 JAROUSSE J.-P., MINGAT A., RICHARD M., La scolarisation maternelle à deux ans: effets pédagogiques et sociaux (Nursery education at two years, educational and social effects) in Education et Formation, No 31, April - June 1992, Paris, p. 46. (Study sponsored by the DEP, Department of Evaluation and Forward Planning of the Ministry of Education.)

order to reduce the rates of failure at school and of drop-outs. In France, "school projects" recognised under the 1989 act provide a statutory framework for partnership.

Partnership, which has become the buzz word in combating failure at school in some Member States, mobilises the various parties and promotes actions of many types - inter-school partnerships, partnerships with local associations, social workers, schools, businesses, etc.

In most Member States, there are arrangements reflecting the local political will to contribute to educational success. This political will is sometimes expressed in town-education contracts, as in France. A political and educational combination in a town or a neighbourhood which mobilises the energies of associations, local elected representatives, schools, etc., can give a certain dynamism to the action of the professional staff involved in education and result in specific actions, support and funding. The introduction of activities such as homework assistance and support teaching mobilises, at local level, residents groups and voluntary associations.

The Social Renewal Programme in the Netherlands since 1989 provides for partnership agreements between the local authority and schools through the introduction of a local fund, to tackle educational problems such as pupil drop-out, which is particularly high in the Netherlands. Moreover, "school attendance committees" have been set up in a number of municipalities and regions in the Netherlands to reduce the level of school drop-out and truancy.

In Spain and Portugal, the role of the local authorities is particularly important in promoting compensatory educational projects aimed at pupils from disadvantaged areas or children who find it difficult to adjust to the traditional education system (rural areas, travellers, children of seasonal workers, etc.). In Portugal, the local authorities play an important role in providing social support, including transport and dietary supplements for, in particular, children in nursery and the first primary classes.

In Italy, the local authorities have become associated for example with schools in measures to prevent drug abuse at school.

In France, "school projects" can be based on a very active partnership with local institutions (socio-cultural facilities, etc.), businesses, local authorities (for example urban development programmes, agreements covering children's leisure time, etc.). Some municipalities (in particular in Aix-en-Provence) have, in cooperation with associations, organised study days and think tanks and committees on educational support and reading, and have urged action in this area. Municipalities also act as intermediaries between the schools and the non-school world, or work with them for specific events.

In Germany, education is traditionally on a half-day basis and the care of children outside school hours has always been regarded as the family's responsibility. However, changes in family structure (increasing number of only children and of single-parent households) and in the world of work (increase in the number of women active outside the home) have led to a more favourable attitude to all-day provision for children. Out-of-school provision by various bodies in partnership with the school is becoming increasingly important. Thus, outside the school, a wide range of institutions are catering for youngsters on behalf of both public and private bodies. Cultural and educational institutions also offer leisure facilities and help with homework. Amongst the main examples of cooperation between the school and those responsible for youth and sports activities, particular mention should be made of the music and art schools, youth and cultural centres and sports clubs.

Businesses are also ideal partners in combating failure at school. They are called upon to play an ever greater role, not only in the initial training of the pupil but also in his social and vocational integration. In Germany, where training in industry is considered particularly important, financial assistance is given to businesses which take on and train young people who have fallen behind at school. Assistance given to the pupil throughout training can help to solve many of the problems.

In the Netherlands, the Rauwenhoff Committee on Education and the Labour Market, in a report in May 1990, advocated greater cooperation between schools and businesses, at all stages of the child's education, in order to bridge the gap between the education system and the labour market. In France, since January 1992, there has been a National Committee on Education and Business to reinforce the partnership between the Education Ministry and the social partners; its task is to match initial, secondary and higher level training as a whole to the needs and expectations of business. This partnership is aimed in particular at improving vocational guidance for young people through the development of information on occupations.

Many local initiatives bring together schools, local authorities and the economic sector in placements in industry, in order to contribute to the occupational integration of young people. For example, the Marolles workshop and the Etangs Noirs centre in Brussels train young people who have been expelled from school but who are still of compulsory school age. In Nijmegen in the Netherlands, a number of businesses are partnered with technical schools in projects aimed at the educational, occupational and social integration of young drop-outs. In Portugal, everyone is being asked to help in the expansion of vocational training as envisaged by the recent reform of the education system. This includes partnerships between the State and local and economic agencies for financing or placements for young people undergoing vocational training.

The educational success of pupils is a sufficiently important challenge to ensure synergies of all sectors of society in most Member States. However, the pupil seems to be the one who has been left out of these partnerships. The pupil, who is at the heart of the problem of failure at school, is rarely involved in the process of real consultation or cooperation throughout the educational process. This is in spite of the fact that those partnerships which have taken this direction seem to be particularly promising and could help to avoid many of the pitfalls, particularly if the pupils themselves were involved to a greater extent.

At the institutional level, there are generally representative structures. However, in view of their limited scope, they do not make the pupil a full partner. Furthermore, it has been found that this form of participation is not very popular with pupils and is unlikely to contribute to the success or effectiveness of such structures.

There are various forms of pupil participation in the administration and life of the school in general.

In Greece, it is organised through student communities, *Mathitikes Kinotites*, in each class and in the school as a whole. It is organised in secondary schools in particular, through class and school general meetings, and class and school councils. Participation is in particular in relation to disciplinary and educational problems.

In Denmark, all pupils have not only the right but the obligation to take part in decisions, in cooperation with the teachers, on the content, forms and methods of teaching, in the framework of the current legislation. Pupil councils are mandatory in every school, provided that the pupils want them, and they represent the children's interests vis-à-vis the municipal or regional education authorities.

In Germany, at the primary stage (*Grundschule*), pupil participation is organised through the election of class representatives. At secondary level, all types of schools have arrangements for pupils to be represented at school, regional and *Land* level. Among the rights and responsibilities of the representatives of the pupils are, in particular, participation in the educational work and classes; running school cultural, social and sports activities; defending pupils' interests before the Head, teachers or parents' representatives; the right of appeal of some pupils against disciplinary measures; participation in the "school conference" alongside the Head, teachers and parents.

There is pupil representation in secondary schools in Belgium (*conseil de participation*), in France (*conseils d'administration des lycées*), in Italy, in Spain (school council) and in Portugal on the school's education and administration council at secondary level. Their role is essentially consultative except in Spain, where they are also administrative bodies. In some cases the pupils have been made full partners, for example, in the guidance sessions introduced in certain schools in Brussels. In Spain, pupils, in choosing their optional subjects, play an important role in determining the definitive form of the curriculum.

Partnership, which is quite a recent concept, requires that both the objectives and the roles of each of the partners be clarified if measures to combat failure at school are to be given their full effect, and if certain pitfalls are to be avoided. This type of partnership at present continues to be a challenge to the inventiveness of all those involved in education and society.

3. HOME-SCHOOL COOPERATION

The involvement of the family in the educational process and more specifically in the measures to combat failure at school is generally conceded, at least in theory, in most Member States. Is the family unit not the setting in which the child finds irreplaceable psychological and material support throughout his education? It is also known that the factors which give rise to failure at school are to be found, for the most part, outside the context of the school, and in particular in the family situation.

Institutional Representation

This partnership takes a variety of forms in the individual Member States[103]. The current trend is to ensure parent participation in the management of the school, in association with other partners. This participation is mainly achieved through the *conseil de classe* whose powers vary in extent depending on the Member State.

In most countries, except in Denmark, either through elected bodies (in particular in France, Italy, Germany, etc.) or local parents associations, the participation of families in the management of the school is essentially consultative. They are rarely associated with fundamental work affecting education in the school. The extent of their participation would appear to depend on the degree of autonomy of the schools. It is significant in Member States such as Denmark and the United Kingdom. Its influence has increased, without however becoming dominant, in Member States where the education system is being decentralised, in particular in Spain and Portugal.

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- In Denmark, parents have been given important tasks in the school council and committees, which can have major implications for the operation and organization of the school.
- In England and Wales, since September 1991, a "Parent's Charter" explains how parents can be involved in the education of their children and informs them of their right to choose the type of education and school for their child and the right to be informed and to be heard, if they consider that the authorities are not fulfilling their statutory obligations. In Northern Ireland, the Parents' Charter published in 1992 informs parents of their rights and responsibilities, particularly as regards their choice of school and their right to information, to be represented on the boards and to seek redress where there are problems. Parents are also entitled to vote to change the status of the school to that of an "integrated school".
- In Scotland, since 1989, School Boards have been elected throughout the country; these are new school management structures involving parents to a considerable extent.
- In the French Community of Belgium, the Decree of 9 November 1990, provides for the setting up in each school of a *conseil de participation* composed in particular of the parents of the pupils, to give their opinion on the management of the school.
- The Flemish Community of Belgium has provided for the mandatory consultation of parents associations in connection with the allocation of teaching hours.
- In Portugal, parent participation is organized at the level of the school's catchment area council or of the school council. The new management model for nursery, primary ("basic") and secondary schools regards parent participation in school management bodies as a means of associating parents with the important decisions regarding the running of the school (approval of the school "project", its budget, its rules, assessment and so on).
- In Greece, each school's parents association is represented on the school committee whose principal task is the financial management of the school.
- In Luxembourg, parents are represented on the local *comité scolaire* which is responsible for the day-to-day management of each school.
- In Italy, parent representatives meeting on the provincial school councils are consulted on the educational problems in the province.
- In Germany, there are several forms of parent participation at the school, area and *Land* levels. At the level of the school, parents' meetings and the "school conference" are essentials. The latter includes teachers, parents and pupils and is chaired by the Head. It deals primarily with matters of school organisation and teaching, the organisation of school events, the adequacy of the text books, marking systems, and educational and disciplinary measures.

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Participation in the education of their children

Families are invited to become involved in the education of their children through either school or extra-curricular activities. In Denmark, parents are closely associated with the teacher in the search for solutions to difficulties experienced by their child. In France, they are involved in the guidance of their child and they have a right of appeal in the event of disagreement with the *conseil de classe*. In Italy, since the beginning of the 1991 academic year, parents can require the introduction of *progetti formativi di tempo lungo*, various activities which complement and enrich the teaching programme, and which can be offered to pupils from different classes.

In most countries, families are informed of their child's progress, whether in the form of a *scheda personale* (personal report) in Italy, a *livret scolaire* (school report book) in France, through an annual report in the United Kingdom, a *bulletin* (school report) in Belgium, etc, or at parent-teacher meetings. In Germany, in addition to their collective rights in the participation bodies, parents have individual rights. They are entitled both to receive half-yearly and annual reports on their child's performance and also to meet the teachers for information regarding the child's general development and progress. In meetings with the class parents, the form teacher discusses the educational aims, teaching methods, the level and development of the class, the choice of text books from the approved list, class work, homework and events of interest to the class.

There are many actions at local level aimed at developing parental participation in the education of their children, in particular pilot projects intended for young people in difficulty. Thus[104], the project in Northamptonshire in Great Britain (1987) introduced new methods to encourage families to participate more actively in certain school activities. These projects call for the support of parents, in particular for activities setting up mini-businesses. They also involve remedial teaching schemes as in the "lieu à (ap)prendre" project in Venissieux in France (1987).

In Coventry, a reading promotion campaign involved parents in class work and gave them the opportunity of observing the pupils' activities. In this connection, the teachers advised them how they could help their children's school work. Lending libraries, or a reading corner in the school, were made available for them, so that families could encourage their children to read[105]. Some schools, again with the aim of encouraging reading, have organised reading clubs and admit groups of children and their families outside school hours.

The topic of partnership with families is under active consideration, particularly in educational priority areas or disadvantaged areas. Originally, the partnership[106] with families in disadvantaged areas was based on the idea that parents were not active enough in the educational community; the function of this partnership is therefore to encourage them to become more involved. The aim is to ensure that the children become pupils and that the parents keep a close eye on their education. The report of the French Council of Education Areas of 19 April 1990 stressed the importance of promoting work with local residents, to ensure real family involvement.

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104 These pilot projects have been developed in the framework of the European Community action programme on "The transition of young people from education to adult and working life". See IFAPLAN report published in July 1988.

105 GEORGES J., Ailleurs aussi, l'échec scolaire. (Elsewhere as well, there is failure at school). Cahiers Pédagogiques No 222, March 1984.

106 Ecole: le temps des partenaires. (School: a time for partners) Migrants-Formation, No 85, June 1991.

The 1968 Van Leer project in Ireland[107] gave parents an essential role to play in the implementation of special measures to combat educational backwardness in the very deprived urban area of Rutland Street. It should be stressed that, although the Irish Constitution protects the role of parents in the education of their children, the education system has not developed partnerships with families to any great extent. The Minister for Education recently (1991) issued a circular in which he actively encouraged this type of association. The parents' role is moreover currently being reviewed so as to make them genuine partners with the school.

The partnership which is developed outside priority areas is intended primarily for parents who are considered the real protagonists in the education area, its function also being to extend the horizons of their children's education.

In conclusion, despite good intentions, partnerships with the family are not, as a whole, used to their full potential. Parents are kept, or keep themselves, at a distance from the school, and this is not conducive to their making a real contribution to combating failure at school.

4. THE TEACHER

The view that teachers have a key role in combating failure at school is generally acknowledged in the Member States. The success and effectiveness of measures depend to a large extent on the ability of the teachers to implement them. There is therefore a need to provide better basic training and to enable them to keep their skills up-to-date in a changing educational context.

a) Training

Initial training

- The training of teachers preparing for pre-school education is carried out by non-university specialist colleges in Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg and Portugal. Their training is integrated in, or linked to, the university in Spain, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Greece, and in Italy since the 1992/93 academic year (act of 19 November 1990).

  On the other hand, in Germany, the staff of pre-school establishments have neither the status nor the training of teachers. The *Erzieher* or educators, as they are called, must, in addition to teaching skills, have nursery nurse training. Training is given in upper secondary schools and prior vocational experience or training of at least two years is required, preferably in social work. The entrance requirement for these studies is a *Realschule* certificate or equivalent.

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107 DRUDY S., MARVIN M., "Success, failure and State intervention in the Irish education system", European symposium on "Educational systems and under-privileged families", 7 - 9 January 1992.

In the other Member States, a secondary education leaving certificate is necessary for entry to nursery teacher training, except in France, where a *licence* (degree - three years of university study) is necessary to qualify for entry to the *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (University Teacher Training Institutes) which prepare student teachers for all levels of education. In Denmark, in addition to the diploma, vocational experience of at least two years or an equivalent qualification is necessary. The average length of training varies from two to four years, interspersed with practical training. A certificate of qualification is awarded on successful completion in most Member States.

- The initial training of primary teachers is provided by universities in half of all Member States (not in Belgium, Denmark, Italy until 1994, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal). To qualify for this training, a secondary school leaving certificate is necessary in most Member States, except France. Training lasts from two to four years after secondary education - in France after the degree - and includes teaching practice. A certificate of competence is awarded.

- Secondary school teachers are trained in universities in most Member States, except teachers for the lower secondary cycle in Belgium, Denmark, Italy until 1994 and the Netherlands, who are trained in non-university higher institutes. To qualify for this training, a secondary school leaving certificate is generally required. The length of training for lower secondary teaching varies from two to five years, to which must be added the years of teacher training, which is sometimes separate (in Germany, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg, etc). Teacher training proper varies from a few weeks in Greece to one or two years in Germany. In general, it follows the academic education. A diploma is awarded upon completion of training.

- In the United Kingdom, initial teacher training is provided either by universities or by higher education colleges in partnership with schools.

According to an OECD study[108], although most Member States are aware of the need to provide teachers with a sound training in their subject, they do not all attach importance to training in the art of teaching and above all to an understanding of the ways in which pupils learn.

In most Member States, pupils' learning difficulties are not specifically tackled during basic training. Only some countries such as the Netherlands, Portugal and Denmark include in teacher training the problems of pupils with learning difficulties in their mother tongue and mathematics. Scotland has introduced[109] a special diploma in the "education of pupils with learning difficulties", which is awarded by the teacher training institute. In Spain, following the recent curriculum reform, intending nursery and primary school teachers take a compulsory course on the educational psychology basis of special education which can deal with these aspects. In addition, every university currently exercising its freedom to develop courses of training for intending nursery and primary school teachers must include - in addition to the common core subjects laid down by the State - other topics considered relevant, amongst which problems of leaving and school failure should not be left out.

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108 L'enseignant aujourd'hui. (The teacher today), OECD, 1990.

109 The courses covered by this diploma are in line with the recommendations of the HMI report on The education of pupils with learning difficulties in primary and secondary schools in Scotland, 1979.

A number of studies have noted significant variations in educational results depending on the class in which pupils are educated. According to this research, "It is more important to know which teacher a pupil is to have than to know whether his father is a labourer, a manager, etc."[110]. It would therefore appear essential to stress teaching skills during training.

In-service training

Traditionally, in-service training of teachers is limited to an updating of knowledge in their subject area and courses last only a few days. There have however been some innovations, as in the United Kingdom, where placements in industry are organised for teachers in order to give them an awareness of the realities of the world of work.

Several Member States are currently making a major effort in in-service training. Belgium is trying to increase the number of primary and special education teachers attending in-service training courses and has since 1990 devoted a substantial budget to the retraining of teachers. Denmark has introduced very elaborate arrangements for in-service training. Spain, since the reform of its educational system (*LOGSE*), considers the in-service training of teachers as both a right and a duty.

In the Netherlands, since the 1991/92 academic year, primary and secondary schools have been given a training budget to organise staff training themselves.

The recent reform of the teacher training system in Greece provides, since September 1992, for three months of training (every 5 or 6 years) on new teaching and assessment methods and special short training programmes on teaching innovations.

Courses to develop awareness of, and possible remedies for, the problem of failure at school are not common in in-service training. In Italy, the national in-service training plan for teachers launched in May 1991 provides for training on specific topics such as combating the problem of school drop-outs, educational guidance and measures to combat all forms of drug addiction. In Denmark, Portugal and the Netherlands, in-service training, like initial teacher training, provides information on the learning difficulties of pupils in the basic subjects. In Spain too, courses dealing with these aspects are included in the in-service training programmes.

In Portugal, the Education for All Programme (*PEPT*) of 16 May 1991 launched a pilot Resource Centre for Education in the Year 2000, which has in particular been given the task of providing in-service teacher training with a view to preventing educational drop-out and gaining acceptance for extended education. Luxembourg teachers are introduced during their in-service training to new differentiated learning strategies through new teaching manuals and material, and an education reform programme for the learning of languages in the primary schools and the lower classes of the secondary technical schools is being prepared.

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110 Research of Alain MINGAT, carried out in the University of Dijon (I.R.E.D.U.) between 1982 and 1985, quoted by R. RIVIERE, L'échec scolaire est-il une fatalité? (Is failure at school inevitable?), Editions Hatier, 1991, p. 133.

As a general rule, it should be emphasised that teachers need extra means to confront pupils' learning difficulties. Their initial or in-service training should provide them with adequate preparation. Although the Member States are aware of the key role of the teacher in combating failure at school, the training given is still too often centred on imparting subject content and does not adequately provide teachers with the range of teaching skills they need to resolve the problem of failure at school and, more important, to prevent it.

b) Organisation of teaching

Even where the teacher has the desired teaching skills, he must also be given the flexible structures which will permit him real room for manoeuvre.

The teacher must have some independence to devise more individualised courses and use teaching and assessment methods which are better adjusted to the differences in pupils' abilities. This was the purpose of the Royal Decrees which were adopted following the *LOGSE* reform (1990) in Spain, which was aimed at developing wide-ranging, open and flexible curricula which would permit teachers to adapt them to the individual characteristics of the pupils and to the educational situation in each school. In France, the new structure of educational cycles was aimed in particular at giving greater responsibility and flexibility to the teacher in organising the work. The Danish teacher enjoys a great deal of autonomy to organise teaching jointly with the pupils. In Italy, the reform of primary education adopted on 5 June 1990 gives the teacher the responsibility for grouping subjects by topics, choosing the teaching method and organising the timetable - the curricula being defined at national level in terms of objectives.

The teacher's autonomy facilitates the establishment of partnership relations with the world outside the school, in particular with the parents. In Denmark, the same form teacher throughout the *Folkeskole* has the task of providing the essential links with the family. The degree and nature of parental participation in the school life of their children depend on him. His role as the family's special contact enables him to involve the family more in the search for solutions to problems which may hinder the pupil's education. His room for manoeuvre also enables him to initiate partnership activities with businesses, to organise job placements and to make a better contribution to the career guidance of his pupils.

In many Member States, it is hoped that teachers can provide this link - as a kind of driving shaft - between the school and the world outside. It must however be noted that they are frequently not given the means to take on this role and to respond to these new requirements.

The increasing complexity of the teacher's role, especially in the context of combating failure at school, cannot seriously be taken on board by the teacher unless he is assured of close cooperation with the other members of the educational community. With this in mind, some education systems have developed team teaching. However, this pattern which is recognised as effective has run up against the resistance of some teachers.

5. THE HEAD TEACHER

In addition to the teacher, there is another educator whom we should mention, if only because of the increasing importance of his function - the head teacher.

The head teacher is always a former teacher in all the Member States. However the methods of appointment vary. These are:

- election by the school board (Spain and Portugal);
- appointment by the central authorities after open competition or from a short list (Belgium, in some schools, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg);
- selection by the local authority or the school (Denmark and the United Kingdom) or the school board (the Netherlands);
- selection by the local authority or by inviting applications after prior approval by the municipal council (in Germany and in some schools in Belgium);
- appointment after written applications in Luxembourg.

The method of appointment affects the range of the head teachers' responsibilities. However, irrespective of the powers available to them, head teachers have an essential role to play in the educational dynamics of school. The research referred to in the chapter on the effectiveness of the schools also stresses the considerable influence of this role in improving schools. This has been understood in most Member States, which have strengthened their functions and increased the resources available. Head teachers must be able to ensure better links between the school and the outside world, and to initiate the dynamics of educational success in the establishment.

6. GUIDANCE

School failure is always traumatic for the pupil. The fairly obvious selection process in some education systems leads pupils experiencing educational difficulties to consider themselves intellectually incompetent. The loss of self-confidence and the discouragement brought on, for example, by repeating the year can cause psychological trauma with serious consequences for the rest of such pupils' education and for their social and vocational integration.

Member States have introduced a wide range of measures intended to prevent learning difficulties or to remedy them - measures aimed at the early detection of possible problems right from the earliest stages of learning; teaching methods specially designed to stimulate the personal and educational development of the pupil, such as group teaching, differentiated teaching, mastery teaching, project teaching, expressive and creative teaching, etc. These forms of teaching use assessment methods which are better adapted to the rates of progress of the individual pupil.

Other forms of education such as sandwich courses, part-time education, etc. should also be mentioned, in which other devices are used to provide special support for the child's education - the system of supervised studies, mentoring by a teacher or a pupil, special learning support structures etc, not to mention all the arrangements for the vocational integration of young people, global education, compensatory education, etc.

We will direct our attention more particularly at this point to measures introduced to ensure better pupil guidance. Guidance is neither a particular moment in time nor a neutral process, but the consequence of a deliberate and rational choice by the pupil or his parents. It is a strategic opportunity which is understood and used differently depending in particular on social background.

The analysis of evaluative cultures in Part I of this report has highlighted how guidance varies according to educational structures.

> Denmark favours a unified educational structure throughout the whole of compulsory education with an identical education for all. Some Member states have institutionalised the common core syllabus or common general education in the first post-primary cycle (France, Italy, Greece, the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal). On the other hand, a number of Member States have a process of early guidance under which pupils are directed from the first or second year of secondary education towards selective educational streams (Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium and Luxembourg).

It should however be pointed out that in most of these countries there is a period of guidance prior to selection for the various streams, in order to avoid specialisation at too early a stage.

> In Germany, the *Orientierungsstufe* allows the streaming decision to be suspended during the first and second years of general secondary education, (which may be organised as an educational cycle independent of the type of school in some *Länder*). In the Netherlands, pupils have first a common syllabus during the first year of secondary education in a transition class. They are then directed towards separate streams in the second year. The recent educational reform provides, as from 1993/94, for the introduction of basic education consisting of a common core syllabus of 15 compulsory subjects for all pupils in lower secondary education, in order to postpone the decision on future studies. In the French Community of Belgium, the first year (or the first two years, depending on the type of school) is also a transition year, a year of guidance prior to choosing a stream. In Luxembourg, the first year of secondary school is a year of guidance during which the pupils can discover their strengths.

Most Member States express a desire to improve the guidance given to pupils and are trying to alleviate the problems linked to the management of streams of pupils. It is suggested that competent services and staff should be provided and more attention given to those mainly concerned, the pupils themselves. It has still to be seen however how this willingness will be translated into practice.

a) Guidance Services

Although the need for educational guidance is no longer questioned in any Member State, its role and status are far from being the same from one Member State to the next. It is however noted that, in general, the guidance service comes into play throughout a process which extends over several years, in cooperation with other parties, whereas it was previously provided mainly at the point of transition from school to adult and working life.

Special services

In some Member States, educational guidance services[111] are within the school. This is the situation in Denmark, Greece and Ireland; it is also the case in Portugal, where, pursuant to the law on the bases of the education system, the psychological and guidance departments are integrated into the educational network and carry out their activities in all schools.

These services are provided in separate centres in Belgium (the psychological, medical and social centres (*CPMS/PMSC*)), in France (the information and guidance centres - *CIO*), in Italy (private guidance offices), and in Spain (specialised educational psychology and career guidance services - *SOEV*, and the educational and career guidance institutes) and in the United Kingdom (careers service). In Luxembourg, the psychology and educational guidance centre, a department of the Ministry of Education, coordinates the work of the educational guidance services in the schools. In Germany, they form part of the official employment services.

These services provide a number of activities, developed to a greater or lesser degree depending on the Member State, but all have the task of assisting pupils in their choices in order to prepare them for adult and working life. Information is readily available in Germany. Countries such as Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Germany stress assessment, using in particular psycho-technical tests. Some services deliver opinions, others provide advice, that is to say, they adopt a non-directive approach (as in the United Kingdom, Denmark and Luxembourg). Although assistance in finding a job or training is also one of the activities of the guidance services in the United Kingdom, this task has been specifically allocated to the employment services in France and Belgium, for example, or to a Ministerial Institute, as in Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany.

School

The guidance function has also been developed within the school itself. The teachers are therefore called upon to play a key role in this area. As they are closer to the pupils and in constant touch with them, they are in an ideal position to understand their ambitions, to direct their needs and to help them overcome their difficulties.

Teachers provide guidance mostly on a part-time basis, except in Portugal where they operate on a full-time basis. They are called *skolevejleder* (guidance teachers) in Denmark; *dekanen* in the Netherlands and careers teachers in the United Kingdom; *Beratungslehrer* in Germany; guidance counsellors in Ireland; *coordinatore dei servici di orientamento* (guidance service coordinators) in Italy; and *psicologoco conselheiro* (psychological counsellors) in Portugal. The main form teacher is generally given greater responsibility for guidance for a specific group of pupils (particularly in the Netherlands, Denmark, etc.).

In Spain, since the reform, considerable importance is given to the development of guidance functions, not only by the form teacher which each group of pupils will have but also by every teacher in the classroom.

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111 For more details, see the summary report drawn up for the Commission of the European Communities by WATTS A.G., DARTOIS C. and PLANT P., Educational and career guidance services for the 14-25 age group in the Member States of the European Community. Editions des Presses Universitaires Européennes, Maastricht, 1988.

The integration of guidance in the curriculum is part of this movement towards the development of guidance within the school. This is found in Denmark, Germany, Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Ireland. This type of course enables pupils to discover their aptitudes and to develop them, and therefore to be in a better position to take their own decisions on their educational and vocational careers.

In Denmark, a minimum of 48 hours of courses on "options" is given in the 7th, 8th, and 9th years of the *Folkeskole* under the responsibility of the form teacher, who can organise meetings with experts, school visits, etc. The teacher counsellor also provides 20 hours of collective guidance counselling over the three years of the *Gymnasium* (between the ages of 17 and 19).

In Greece, 45 periods on "options" are given to the pupils in the first three years of the *Gymnasium* (between the ages of 12 and 14 years) and 30 periods are given to the pupils of the first year of the technical-vocational school (around the age of 15), and in the first and second years in the general *Lykeio* (around 15-16 years of age).

In Portugal, optional sessions of approximately one hour per week are devoted to guidance in the ninth year, and in the later technical and vocational cycles.

In the United Kingdom, courses presenting the various career choices available are introduced in the last three years of compulsory secondary education (between the ages of 14-16 years). These can also be incorporated into other subjects closer to the personal life of the pupils. This is also the practice in Italy, Ireland and Luxembourg.

In Belgium, these courses are organised by the psycho-medico-social centres in group sessions 4 to 5 times a year.

In France, the possibility of incorporating guidance into the curriculum is under study. However, lower and upper secondary schools (*collèges* and *lycées*) are already allowed to use school time for guidance within the framework of the "school projects" (1989 Framework Law).

In Germany, the *Arbeitslehre* provides an introduction to the world of work in all *Hauptschulen* (lower secondary education) for 5 periods a week over three years (between 13 and 15 years of age). The aim of the programme is to inform pupils about training possibilities by exposing them to the world of work through half-week placements in industry or visits.

Other Member States also have introduced work experience into their education for career choices. This is the case in Denmark where placements in industry are organised during the last two years of the *Folkeskole* (around 15-16 years of age), in particular by the teachers themselves.

Four to six job placements of two to three days enable pupils in Luxembourg to have their first contact with various occupations.

The Member States have shown interest in this type of introduction to the world of work because it helps to motivate the pupil to greater effort in learning and to develop certain skills. Work experience, in particular through the setting up of mini-businesses, is common throughout Europe, for example in Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom. Pupil cooperatives in Greece, which have been set up especially in rural areas to grow local produce, are part of this picture.

b) Guidance after compulsory education

Following compulsory education, the guidance services operate in particular throughout upper secondary education. However it is generally the employment services for adults (aimed in particular at the labour market) which are responsible for the young people who leave after completing their compulsory education. Many other structures are available to complement the limited scope of these services. In Ireland, the Skills Foundation Courses (basic training courses) are intended for early leavers. Self-assessment tests, aptitude tests, placements in certain occupations and vocational guidance help them to choose a specific course of training.

In Denmark, all local authorities are required to provide educational and vocational guidance for young people by contacting them at least twice a year for two years after they have left school or until they reach the age of 19 (unless they are catered for by other guidance bodies). For the most part, the teacher - counsellors of the *Folkeskole* carry out this role.

In France, young people with no qualifications and no job are catered for by various social welfare structures including the reception, information and guidance offices (*PAIO - Permanences d'accueil, d'information et d'orientation*); the local organisations, which involve both sides of industry and local public representatives, are responsible for educational and vocational guidance and cooperate closely with the economic decision-makers.

Although the facilities for meeting young people's needs outside the education sector would appear to be inadequate in most countries, it should be pointed out that, in spite of this, in most Member States, there are voluntary centres which provide such guidance.

There is also a wide range of measures to ensure the vocational integration of young people who have failed at school. These frequently come about from a combination of national and local effort and lead to partnerships of all those involved in social, economic, cultural and political life. The activities of local organisations in certain Member States should also be stressed here. By using a close-knit network of partnerships between schools, social and vocational bodies, local businesses, public authorities and social workers, they play an important role in informing, guiding, training, employing and ensuring the social integration of young people.

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS[112]

112 This summary has been written by Professor M. CRAHAY of the University of Liège in cooperation with A. DELHAXHE, head of the EURYDICE European Unit's Studies and Analyses section.

A. FROM SCHOOL FAILURE TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Out of a total population of 340 million in the European Community, it is estimated that there are 53 million people (or 15%) living below the poverty line. Worse still, there are now more people excluded from prosperity today than in 1975, when it was estimated that there were 38 million. This is a sorry state of affairs, and the objective set out in Article 2 of the Treaty of Rome - *"The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of the Member States, to promote ... an accelerated raising of the standard of living..."* - is still a long way from being achieved.

The mechanisms which lead to social exclusion are complex. Economics plays a crucial role. However, for the individual, the level of training achieved is a major factor. As the economy stagnates, the risk of social exclusion is aggravated by any inadequacies in training.

Schools cannot be expected to take upon themselves the complete eradication of the problem of social exclusion, but they can assume the task of ensuring that a maximum number of young people are put in a position to play an active part in the economic and cultural life of the European Community.

The Member States are nevertheless making a considerable financial investment in education. Is it possible to establish a link between the level of Member States' financial investment in education and the proportion of pupils arriving on the labour market without qualifications? Table 7, which is based on data in the document published by the OECD (1992)[113] and from that of the European Community Observatory (G. ROOM, 1991)[114], provides useful pointers for examining this hypothesis.

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113 OECD, Education at a Glance - OECD Indicators, Paris 1992.

114 ROOM G. et al., Politiques nationales de lutte contre l'exclusion sociale (National Policies for Combating Social Exclusion), first annual report of the European Community Observatory, DG V, Brussels, 1991.

▶ **TABLE 7:**

Expenditure on education (OECD) and percentages of pupils leaving the education systems without any qualification (G. ROOM).

Member State	Public expenditure on pre-school, primary, and secondary education per pupil (in US dollars). Source: OECD (1988 figures)	Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure (1988)	Percentage of pupils leaving secondary education without a certificate (G. ROOM, 1991)
Belgium	2 838	10.5%	
Denmark	3 726	11.6%	
Germany	2 263	9.1%	12 % (1988)
Greece			36 % (1987)
Spain	1 354	9.7 %	23 % (1988)
France	2 360	10.2 %	19 % (1986)
Ireland	1 412	11.5%	8 % (1989)
Italy	2 546	9.4 %	11 % (1988)
Luxembourg	5 190	10.2 %	
Netherlands	2 094	10.9 %	26 % (1986)
Portugal	1 295	10.7 %	
United Kingdom	2 430	11.4%	8 % (1989)

It is obviously not possible to establish a systematic link between these various parameters. For example, France has a rate of 19% of pupils who leave the education system without a certificate despite its investment of $2 360 per pupil, whereas Ireland has only 8% of pupils who leave the system without a certificate despite a lower rate of investment in education ($1,412). Public expenditure on education per pupil is roughly comparable in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands ($2,263 and $2,094 respectively); however, only 12% leave the system without a certificate in the Federal Republic of Germany whereas 26% do so in the Netherlands. It would also be wrong to conclude that the converse is true, i.e. that less investment in education is accompanied by a lower rate of pupils leaving the system without a certificate. Spain is an illustration of this point; it devotes only $1,354 per pupil and has a high rate of pupils leaving school without a certificate.

As early as 1966, J.S. COLEMAN[115] noted that in the United States it was impossible to establish a direct link between financial investment in education and academic outturn. Moreover, the type of correlation above shows the difficulty inherent in using the comparative approach. Each country has its special characteristics as regards the organisation of its education system and its own criteria for awarding certificates. The rates of those leaving without certificates are at least as much a reflection of these differences as they are of those in relation to financial investment.

115 COLEMAN J.S. et al., The Quality of Educational Opportunity, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1966.

B. SCHOOL FAILURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF THE MEMBER STATES

In theory, it is easy to define failure at school. In his *Dictionnaire de l'évaluation et de la recherche en éducation*, G. DE LANDSHEERE[116] defines failure as "a situation where an educational objective is not attained". In reality, school failure reflects different situations in different education systems. It is impossible, for instance, to equate failure at school with the need to repeat the school year, on the one hand because this has been abolished in several education systems, at least in primary education, and on the other hand because in countries in which it is still practised, repetition of the year may in fact reflect completely different levels of attainment. In the French Community of Belgium, for example, A. GRISAY[117] has been able to demonstrate that pupils with an identical level of achievement, measured according to a standardised test, could succeed with distinction in one school and fail in another.

Failure at school takes different forms according to the education system in question. To understand how schools contribute to social exclusion, it is necessary to try to understand the structural organisation of the education process and the individual procedures for awarding qualifications under each system.

There are three major differences between education systems, according to whether or not:

- the practice of repeating the year is used as a tool of educational management;
- there are different educational streams at lower secondary level;
- certification at the end of any level of education is based on an examination, whether centralised or not.

In some countries, the practice of repeating a year is considered educationally positive for pupils encountering difficulties. In other countries, promotion to the next class is automatic. Between these extremes, there are education systems which permit the repetition of the year at the end of each cycle, whether of two or of three years. Nowadays, the scope for repeating the year is limited in all countries.

In organising a common core curriculum for lower secondary education, France, Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom have opted for a type of organisation in which the question of career guidance is postponed to age 15-16. As in the case of all the northern European countries (Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), Denmark has adopted a unified structure; there is continuity of education throughout compulsory schooling, with no break between the primary level and the first level of secondary. On the other hand, the Benelux countries[118] and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as Ireland, Switzerland and Austria, require their pupils to choose an educational stream either at the beginning, or from the second year, of secondary education.

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116 DE LANDSHEER G., Dictionnaire de l'évaluation et de la recherche en éducation. (Dictionary of assessment and research in education), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1992.

117 GRISAY A., Les mirages de l'évaluation scolaire (1). Rendement en français, notes et échecs à l'école ordinaire? (The illusion of pupil assessment: performance in French, marks and failures in primary schools), Revue de la Direction Générale de l'Organisation des Etudes, XIX, 5, pp. 29-42, 1984.

118 The Netherlands introduced a law in 1992 to reform lower secondary education. This law provides for the gradual introduction of a common core curriculum as from September 1993. The new structure is called *basisvorming* (basic education).

The education systems in the European Community also differ from each other as regards the organisation of the methods of assessing and awarding certificates to pupils. In some countries, pupils must take external examinations (either standardised[119] and set by approved bodies or set by the teacher and externally moderated) and the award of school leaving certificates depends, at least partially, on the results of these tests. In other countries, assessment of pupils and the award of certificates to them are the exclusive responsibility of the teacher, and are generally based on a combination of continuous assessment and tests.

Most Member States have established systems of external assessment at the end of upper secondary education. Four countries are exceptions to the rule - Belgium, Greece, Spain and Portugal. France and the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands also use such a system at the end of lower secondary education. In the Netherlands, pupils can take standardised tests at the end of primary school. These tests contribute to the assessment of the pupils' attainments in order to provide them with educational guidance towards one of the secondary education streams. In Northern Ireland and Luxembourg, entry to traditional general secondary education (Grammar School and *lycée général* respectively) depends on pupils' success in national examinations.

These differences in the education systems call for closer examination. What, aside from the individual cultural characteristics of each Member State, has led one country to opt for automatic promotion, or the organisation of a common core curriculum, or external assessment using standardised tests, while others have made the opposite choices? More specifically, we shall examine the research data in relation to this diversity of arrangements.

C. SHOULD PUPILS BE MADE TO REPEAT THE YEAR?

Research literature abounds with references to this subject. In 1974, G.B. JACKSON[120] was able to refer to over 200 studies. His extremely rigorous examination of this literature led him to assert that the negative effects of repeating the year largely outweighed the benefits that could be expected from it. A little less than ten years later, C.T. HOLMES and K.M. MATTHEWS[121] applied the modern technique of meta-analysis to the most thorough research on the subject and confirmed G.B. JACKSON's[122] conclusion.

It is no doubt on the basis of this work that all Member States are tending to limit the scope for making pupils repeat years. Countries in which promotion is automatic can also point to the results of international studies on educational success. The IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) has, since the beginning of the 1960s, concentrated its efforts and the ingenuity of a vast number of researchers on comparisons of

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119 Standardisation of a test is to be understood as "the exact definition of the methods for using a test. First standardisation factor: all pupils in the same category take the same test. In addition, the conditions for administering and correcting these tests are standardised". Dictionnaire de l'évaluation et de la recherche en éducation, PUF, Paris (G. De Landsheere, 1992).

120 JACKSON G.B., The research evidence on the effects of grade retention, Review of Educational Research, Vol. 45, 4, pp. 613-635, 1974.

121 HOLMES C.T. and MATTHEWS K.M., The effects of non promotion on elementary and junior high school pupils: a meta-analysis, Review of Educational Research, Vol. 54, 2, pp. 225-236, 1984.

122 A detailed review of this literature can be found in M. CRAHAY (1993 b), Faut-il faire doubler? (Should they repeat the year?) Service de Pédagogie Expérimentale, University of Liège.

the academic success of education systems in subjects as diverse as mathematics, the sciences, foreign languages, reading and civics. The Scandinavian countries and Japan, which have abolished the practice of repeating the year, generally have results which are above the international average. Close examination of the studies published by the IEA indicates that it is impossible to establish any absolute connection between automatic promotion and the effectiveness of the education system. If, for example, we take the latest international study on the reading skills of pupils aged 9 and 14, the most successful countries include most of those which have opted for automatic promotion (Finland, Sweden, etc.) as well as some which authorise repeating at the end of every year (Switzerland). The results of these international comparisons do, however, refute the claim that high rates of failure at school would be the price to pay for a quality education[123].

Repeating the year, which is ineffective, is frequently also the result of subjective decisions on the part of teachers. This renders the practice unjust and leads us, as we will see later, to suspect disparities in local assessment. What is even more serious in our view is that it has now been shown that repeating the year shakes pupils' confidence in their own learning abilities. C. DWECK[124] coined the term "learned helplessness" to denounce this practice. This American researcher demonstrated that repeating the year implies a negative assessment which affects the individual. The damage is all the more serious when the pupil's teachers, parents, and classmates attribute educational problems to intellectual ability, holding the view that intelligence is innate. In short, the child learns to interpret difficulties not as obstacles to be overcome but as the very proof of lack of ability. This process ends in fatalism and resignation.

The message of the research is clear - whereas repeating the year is most frequently detrimental to the development of the child, automatic promotion does not resolve all the problems either.

D. SHOULD THE EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE OF PUPILS INTO SPECIALISED COURSES BE POSTPONED?

It is to T. HUSEN[125] that we owe the basic line of thinking which has led to in-depth comparisons being made between countries with different staying-on rates[126] after compulsory education. According to HUSEN, the measures adopted in Europe to increase access to general secondary education have run into objections of the "standards will suffer"-type.

He argues that, in as far as it is observed that the greater the proportion of an age group enrolled in general secondary education, the lower the general results, this objection is valid. For example, if enrolments increase from 20% to 50% of the age group, as has happened recently in some European countries, the average results of these 50% will be lower than those obtained by the 20% previously selected on a more rigorous basis (1979, p. 106).

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123 A detailed examination of the results collected by the IEA over the last three decades can be consulted in M. CRAHAY (1993 a). Echec scolaire et efficacité des systèmes d'enseignement (School failure and the effectiveness of the education systems). Service de Pédagogie Expérimentale, University of Liège.

124 DWECK C., Motivation. In LESGOLD A. and GRASER R. Foundations for a Psychology of Education, pp. 87-137. Hillsdale N.J. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989.

125 HUSEN T., L'école en question (Calling the school into question). Brussels, Mardaga, 1979.

126 The staying-on rate is generally taken to mean the ratio of the number of pupils in a certain age group who are still in school to the number of young people in that age group overall. In the present case, T. HUSEN looks more specifically at rates of attendance in general secondary education.

For this reason, studies which compare the performance of pupils of 20 or 30 years ago, who attended a grammar schools, *lycée* or *Gymnasium* reserved for less than a quarter of the age cohort, with that of pupils who today attend schools open to 80-90% of adolescents of the same age, must be regarded as having only relative validity. Similarly, it is barely meaningful to compare average scores in mathematics in a country with a staying-on rate of 75% with the scores in a country where only 20% of the age group have the opportunity to take advanced courses in mathematics.

It is for these reasons that the IEA has, since the 1966 study on mathematics, usually carried out several types of comparisons. One traditionally covers the national averages obtained from the total sample; the others cover the average results of the highest 10%, 5%, 4% or 1% in all countries. The trends observed when such an analysis is carried out are clear, the differences between countries being less when only the performances of the top percentage bands are considered.

In 1966, T. HUSEN took as an example the comparison of scores in mathematics obtained in the United States, where a common core curriculum is followed, and the Federal Republic of Germany, where pupils are selected for different types of education at the beginning of secondary school. It was found that the total sample of American pupils, corresponding to 75% of 17-18 year-olds, obtained the lowest average (13) of all the countries participating. On the other hand, the top 4% obtained an average of 33, the same as for the top 4% in Germany which, at the time, could be considered the more selective country, since the staying-on rate was only 9% in traditional general secondary education (*Gymnasium*).

Similar findings have been obtained from data collected in the course of other comparative research carried out by the IEA. A summary of this research can be found in T. HUSEN's, *L'école en question* (Calling the school into question) (1979). According to him, the conclusion which can be drawn from the surveys carried out by the IEA is that general (comprehensive) education, through its openness and the absence of selective examinations at primary and lower secondary levels, appears to be a more efficient strategy for making provision, throughout compulsory education, for all the talents in a country. The bigger the net, the greater the possibility of catching fish (1979, p. 112).

In general, those who advocate the organisation of a common core curriculum in lower secondary education can draw on two conclusions repeated several times by the IEA, to the effect that:

- selective education systems do not produce a higher percentage of intellectual elite: and
- there is no systematic connection between the percentages of pupils with high scores and those of pupils with low scores.

In short, the formation of an elite cannot necessarily be achieved at the price of greater selectivity, by relegating the less gifted to the less prestigious, and probably less stimulating, streams or making them leave the education system altogether.

E. HOW SHOULD THE ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS BE ORGANISED FOR PURPOSES OF CERTIFICATION?

1. FROM THE CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE TO THE CULTURE OF FAILURE

The assessment of pupils is a delicate matter and the traps into which teachers can fall have now been clearly identified. The most important is called "the posthumous effect" (1947) - whatever the distribution of ability at the beginning of the academic year, the distribution of marks at the end of the year is by and large in the form of a Gaussian (normal) distribution.

According to this "law", teachers tend to adjust the level of their teaching and their appraisal of pupil performance so as to maintain from year to year approximately the same normal distribution of marks. As a result, on the basis of a test given to all the pupils in a particular age group, two average pupils in different classes can obtain different results in the examinations organised by their respective teachers. A pupil in a class where the majority of pupils are weak will probably be marked up, and may even be considered one of the best pupils in the class. The other, however, if he is in a class in which most of the pupils are better than he is, runs the risk of being marked down, and may even be considered by the teacher too weak to be promoted to the next year.

More fundamentally, we may suspect teachers of using normative evaluation where assessment based on objectives should be used. It is true that psychometry has accustomed us to interpret pupils' scores in tests of learning or intelligence by placing them in a statistical distribution. The performance of one individual is judged against that of the others. This practice has spread and has become good practice. Today, most teachers imagine that the assessment of their pupils' work should lead to a ranking of pupils.

These assessment practices may be considered an example of the culture of excellence which, according to the Geneva sociologist P. PERRENOUD[127], characterises the way schools operate. According to him, the school constructs hierarchies of excellence. In our understanding (or *habitus*) of excellence, "Excellence has no social value except when it is not accessible to all" (PERRENOUD, 1984, p. 70). Furthermore, "there is a meritocratic model within every school ... according to which, having given everyone the same educational opportunities, those who reach the highest levels of excellence can be considered the most deserving. The hierarchy of excellence thus acquires an unassailable legitimacy and may even be transformed into a moral hierarchy, in particular ... wherever success appears to depend especially on the pupils' work, on their willingness to submit to formative disciplines and on their perseverance in their efforts" (p. 81).

Teachers, believing that they are supposed to distinguish the good pupils from the weak and setting out to produce a rank order of pupils, are inevitably led to favour discriminative questions and to draw up for each test a - frequently artificial - scale of values which ideally will result in a normal distribution of marks.

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127 PERRENOUD P., La fabrication de l'excellence scolaire (Manufacturing excellence at school), Geneva, Droz, 1984.

At school level, the cultivation of excellence can easily turn into a cultivation of failure. There is a lot of research which shows that there is a considerable arbitrary element in teachers' decisions on repeating the year. Shut away in the microcosm of their classroom and driven by an ideology of excellence, teachers tend to pitch their teaching at their best pupils and therefore to make demands which go beyond the requirements of the curriculum; their tests are also set at the level of the best pupils, which inevitably leads them to underestimate the attainments of the weakest pupils in their classes, and to attribute an absolute rather than a relative value to their judgment.

2. TOWARDS THE EVALUATIVE CULTIVATION OF SUCCESS

Supporters of education for success adopt the opposite view. For them, the school's task is not to construct hierarchies of excellence but to stimulate the greatest number of pupils to learn as much as possible. Summative assessment should therefore be based on reference criteria, that is to say, it should assess the pupil in relation to the skills to be mastered.

More important still, assessment should have a regulatory function. This would ideally include two aspects:

- a feedback aspect, which would permit the pupil to assess what has been learned in relation to the objectives to be attained; and

- a monitoring aspect, which would enable teaching to be adjusted or redirected more appropriately towards the mastery of the skills in question.

Use of standardised tests and external assessment is doubtless one means of countering the vagaries of local assessment.

Since the SOMERSET[128] experiment in Kenya, it is recognised that what is generally known as a "backwash effect" is to be expected, i.e. that the content of an external examination has repercussions on what is taught. Thus careful design of tests to be taken by all pupils at certain stages of education can influence the learning opportunities which teachers provide. In addition, external assessment gives teachers a means of identifying pupils' attainments in relation to those defined at national level and of identifying any gaps in their knowledge. If the weakest in a class reach the minimum level of achievement, the teacher can be reassured and dismiss any idea of having them repeat the year. If most pupils reveal particular gaps in their knowledge, the teacher knows where, and on what, teaching effort needs to be concentrated. In Sweden and France, in particular, external evaluation is used for such purposes of control.

In other words, external evaluation provides teachers with a tool to use in carrying out their control procedures. Teachers are thus able to assess the attainments of their pupils in a much wider frame of reference than the microcosm of their classroom.

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128 SOMERSET H.C.A., Examination Reform: The Kenya Experience. A report prepared for the World Bank, June 1982 (Mimeographed document).

F. SHOULD PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION BE PROMOTED?

The role assigned to pre-school (nursery) education differs from one Member State to the other. Some Member States have structures which are compatible with early education. In France and Belgium, 30% of children attend nursery classes from the age of about 2 years and 90% attend school at age 3. Since the 1990 reform (*LOGSE*), Spain is also going in this direction. On the other hand, although it is optional everywhere except in Luxembourg, where it is compulsory, the education of children at age 4 is general in most Member States, with school attendance rates close to 60%. Northern Ireland is a particular case, in that compulsory primary education begins there at age 4.

In all Member States, pre-school education has been assigned the task of ensuring the social and affective development of the child. There are, however, differences of emphasis both as regards the respective roles of the family and the pre-school centres and as regards the importance to be given to early learning. Denmark and Germany, stress the educational role of the family and tend to limit the function of pre-school centres to developing children's social skills and their general awareness. Elsewhere, and more particularly in France since 1881, and in Belgium, Spain, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal, pre-school education has been assigned the dual function of the social development of the child and preparation for initial learning. In these countries, pre-school education of children is seen as a means of promoting success at school. French studies have shown the positive influence of the length of pre-school education on the rest of a child's studies[129]. Paradoxically, the highest rates of educational backwardness are also to be found in some of these countries. On the other hand, in several of the countries in which pre-school institutions do not have the specific task of laying the foundations for subsequent education, these rates are much lower, or even nil. In fact, we have an astonishing conjunction here, in that most of the countries which promote the development of pre-school education also have a tradition of repeating the year. Should we see in this the other side of the same phenomenon - the importance given to early cognitive learning? Should a study perhaps be made of the sequences and rates of learning in the various Member States? Are some in more of a hurry than others? Is there any advantage to be gained from such pressure?

In no way are the benefits of pre-school education being called in question.

However, one may wonder whether those Member States which have placed their trust in structures on nursery school lines fully appreciated the implications of their choice. The financial and social status of pre-school teachers is still the least enviable in the whole teaching profession. Fortunately, their qualifications have recently been subject to review in several countries. Since 1992, in the recruitment of pre-school teachers in Luxembourg, particular weight has been given to the examinations in teaching skills. In 1990, Italy decided to transfer the initial training of such teachers to the universities, and the law will be brought into force in the near future.

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129 C. DURAND-PRINBORGNE. L'égalité scolaire par le coeur et la raison. (Educational equality based on sentiment and reason) Paris, Nathan coll. Education, 1988

GEDRAM. Echec et maternelle: avant six ans déjà la sélection (Failure and nursery school - selection even before the age of 6), Paris, Syros, 1980.

N. BOUYALA & B. ROUSILLE. L'enfant dans la vie. Une politique pour la petite enfance. (The child in life - a policy for early childhood) Paris, Report to the Ministry for the Family, 1982.

The study by J. P. LAROUSSE, A. MINGAT & M. RICHARD, La scolarisation maternelle à deux ans: effets pédagogiques et sociaux (Nursery education at 2 years - the educational and social effects) in Education et Formation, No 31, April-June 1992), sponsored by the DEP, indicates that, although education at 2 years is more cost-effective than measures to reduce class sizes in primary school, it would not benefit children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

G. HOW CAN TEACHER TRAINING CONTRIBUTE TO ERADICATING FAILURE AT SCHOOL?

Diversity continues to be the rule as regards the training of teachers, each Member State having its own special features. Most of them have, however, opted for some form of initial training linked to, or within, the universities.

Most industrialised countries are now aware of the need to ensure that teachers have a sound training in their subjects. It is also important for them to be convinced of the need for teachers to have pedagogical training and for them to understand the different ways in which pupils learn. In most Member States of the European Community, pupils' learning difficulties are not specifically covered in initial teacher training courses.

It appears that, in in-service training as in initial training, the development of awareness of the question of failure at school and of the solutions to this problem is not current practice. In-service training for teachers is still too frequently limited to updating teachers' knowledge of their own subjects and a few study days.

Teachers, however, are a key element in the struggle for the educational success of the greatest possible number of pupils. According to a study by A. MINGAT, "it is more important to know which teacher a child is to have than to know whether his father is a labourer, a manager or whatever"[130]. Other investigations, unfortunately limited to Belgium and Switzerland, indicate that most teachers do not consider themselves responsible for the failure of their pupils (G. PINI[131]; V. DE LANDSHEERE[132]). As they remain convinced of the hereditary nature of intelligence, they consider this the principal cause of their pupils' difficulties. They also blame the home environment, the negative influence of television and pupils' lack of effort. Even worse, most teachers admit that they have little knowledge of the techniques of formative assessment and the strategies of differentiated education. In short, it is to be feared that too many teachers still consider their task to be the transmission of knowledge, whereas they are increasingly expected to be not only subject specialists but also teaching specialists.

The initiatives which several Member States have taken, with the objective of getting teachers to plan their teaching taking into account the individual characteristics of the pupils, are therefore to be welcomed.

H. THERE IS A PILOT IN THE PLANE, BUT ... DOES HE HAVE AN INSTRUMENT PANEL?

The organisation and management of the education system is a difficult business for at least two reasons:

- The characteristics of an education system are interactive. A change in one parameter may affect the overall balance, either by causing a dynamic effect, the positive aspects of which exceed expectations, or by having unwanted effects on other aspects of the system.

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130 A. MINGAT, IREDU, University of Dijon, research carried out between 1982 and 1985, quoted by R. RIVIERE (1991) L'échec scolaire est-il une fatalité? (Is failure at school inevitable?) Paris, Hatier.

131 PINI G., Effets et méfaits du discours pédagogique (Effects and ill-effects of educational discussion), Education et Recherche, 13, 3, pp. 255-272, 1991.

132 DE LANDSHEERE V., Pour une école sans échec (Towards a school without failures), Research report, University of Liège, June 1993.

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- Every education system is the product of a society's history. Its characteristics are the result of a lengthy refining process during which the conflicts of pressure from various interest groups have been resolved.

This is why it is dangerous to claim that a measure which is effective in one country would have the same results in another.

Despite these reservations, comparison of education systems is nonetheless valuable. It invites decision-makers in each country to see the organisation of their systems in perspective, and it can lead to their identifying other patterns of organisation which might be effective in their own countries. It may equally reassure them as to the aptness of the choices they have made.

Today, more than ever, researchers are reluctant to regard their answers as definitive. The key word is fine-tuning, which should be distinguished from the automatic adjustments which occur in every social organisation. But tuning implies that objectives are explained and that systematic procedures are established for information gathering. Similarly, we can speak of the monitoring of education systems. Several Member States have already introduced sound monitoring procedures while others are studying the possibility. Could we perhaps imagine concerted monitoring of the education systems of the Member States?

Any such project would imply the adoption by Member States of a list of common indicators. With its project on the Indicators of Education Systems (INES), the OECD has started something along these lines. Unfortunately, not all Member States are participating in this systematic collection of information. The IEA has also demonstrated the importance of joint effort in the field of comparative research in education. The decision of the Commission of the European Communities (Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth) to undertake research to establish the indicators considered most useful for the development of Member States' education systems is therefore to be welcomed.

Today, however, we have some sound facts:

- Repeating the year is only exceptionally of help to pupils encountering difficulties.

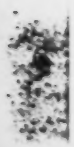
- The early selection of pupils for differentiated streams is as prejudicial to the fairness of an education system as it is to the emergence of an intellectual elite.

- The organisation of external tests helps to offset the subjective prejudices of teachers.

These facts do not resolve all the problems but help us to avoid the wrong answers. What is certainly important as of now is for politicians and scientists to join their efforts and to build on what has been achieved. In other words, the broad outlines of tried and proven solutions should first be established. At the same time, there should be investment in research into new methods of teaching, teacher training and cooperation with parents, to enhance current knowledge on education, with the ultimate aim of increasing the intellectual and human potential of the European Community.

INFORMATION SHEETS

ON THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS
OF THE MEMBER STATES



BELGIUM

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

In the three "Communities" (French, Flemish and German-speaking), "basic education" is organised in the same way. It encompasses education at both the pre-school, commonly called "*enseignement maternel*" (nursery education), and the primary levels.

After primary school, which lasts for six years, pupils move on to secondary school. The Flemish Community has one single system, organised in branches of study (*filières*), while in the French and German-speaking Communities, lower secondary education is structured either directly in branches or in a common core syllabus, depending on whether the traditional (Type II) or renovated system of education (Type I) is chosen. The latter does not divide into branches until the end of the observation cycle (*cycle d'observation* or first two years of secondary school). In Type II schools, the first cycle of secondary education is already organised in branches. Only 5% of pupils still attend this type of school.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Nursery schools (*écoles maternelles*) accept children from 2 1/2 to 6 years old. Attendance is optional, but the majority of children attend from age 3. Pre-school education is generally offered in premises attached to primary schools and the educational activities provided are adapted to the needs of children's age groups. In the context of pre-school education, evaluation is based on observation and serves prognostic, normative and diagnostic purposes.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Education is compulsory for a period of 12 years, between the ages of 6 and 18; education must be full-time up to age 15-16 and at least part-time until 18.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Intended for children aged 6 to 12, primary education lasts for 6 years and is organised in three successive cycles of 2 years each. Pupils are often assigned to classes according to age. Generally, one teacher is responsible for all subjects during a school year. Specialist teachers may teach classes such as sport, religion, etc. In certain schools, the same teacher takes a class for two to three years.

In addition to this structure, certain schools have a section for pupils 5 to 8 years old. In this system, the teaching staff bring together or divide up the pupils of the various ages into groups for different activities and subjects, according to the pupils' needs and aptitudes.

Assessment

Each school has complete responsibility for the pedagogical task of assessing its pupils. As assessment is one of the areas in which the pedagogical freedom of each education network is guaranteed, each organising body can define the kind and method of assessment it wishes to use and the way it communicates the results, as long as it observes the relevant laws and regulations.

Throughout the year, teachers use continuous, formative assessment to monitor the progress of their pupils. At the end of the school year, teachers can use tests to assess their pupils. The teacher or the teaching team assesses the year's work and the results of the tests at the end of the year (if any) in order to decide whether a pupil should be promoted to the next class. In this, the pupils' abilities of analysis and synthesis, their ability to think independently, their cooperative spirit and taste for work, and for work well done, must all be taken into account.

Report cards regularly keep the child and the parents informed of the child's test results, academic progress, behaviour in class and personal development. It is possible for children to repeat classes each year and even within a cycle, but this may not happen more than once in the course of their "basic education", although exceptions are made. Pupils who experience learning difficulties can receive special and individualised assistance from a support teacher.

When they have completed their primary education, pupils receive a *certificat d'études de base* (*C.E.B.* or certificate of basic education). It is granted on the basis of the year's work and of any examinations at the end of the sixth class. In subsidised schools[1133], pupils and their parents can choose between an examination organised by the school and the standardised cantonal examination given by the inspectorate. This certificate can also be granted to anyone who successfully completes either the first year of secondary school (*classe d'accueil B*) or a second year of vocational training, even though they did not obtain the certificate in primary school.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

A. THE FRENCH AND GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

To be admitted into the first year A (first general) of secondary education, it is necessary to have passed primary education and to hold a certificate of basic education (*C.E.B.*). If this is not the case, it is necessary to obtain a favourable opinion from the centre for psychological, medical and social services and then the approval of the Admissions Council, which is made up of staff members charged by the head of the school to assess the admission of pupils to a particular type of education, section and course of study. Pupils 12 years old, who have not successfully completed their primary education, can still be permitted to enter a first year adjustment class (*"première B"; classe d'accueil ou de transition*).

1. Secondary education - Type I

95 % of pupils in the French Community attend schools of Type I, commonly called "reformed education".

After a common cycle (a 2-year observation cycle), secondary education of Type I splits into two main branches, each comprising two cycles of two years each:

- the transition branch (general, technical and artistic education), which aims to prepare pupils for higher education, while leaving them the option of entering employment;
- the qualification branch (technical, vocational and artistic education), which aims to prepare pupils for employment, while allowing them the option of going on to higher education.

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133 Catholic schools and schools organised by local authorities (towns and municipalities). In basic education, the majority of schools are in this subsidised network.

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This education is thus organised in three 2-year stages:

a) The first cycle, called the "observation cycle"

The first year follows a common curriculum. Beginning in the second year, some options are added to the general education curriculum. Throughout this cycle, the teaching and psychological, medical and social teams observe the pupils to assist them in choosing their future direction of study. Some class tests are given to assist in the observation and guidance of the pupils.

Pupils whose performance is weak or who fail the first year B (adjustment class), can be directed to the vocational branch, which introduces pupils to at least two vocational fields.

b) The second cycle, called the "guidance cycle"

In the second cycle, the common core curriculum is reduced and there are separate courses for different kinds of education (general, technical, artistic - qualification or transitional - and vocational).

c) The third cycle, called the "specific cycle"

In this cycle, there are more optional subjects than common core courses. There are possibilities for transfer between the branches. It is still possible to change branch at the end of the second cycle, subject to specific restrictive conditions regarding the equivalence of the different levels in the different branches. But it is not possible to change branches between the fifth and sixth years.

In secondary school, the main body responsible for assessing pupils is the *conseil de classe*, which includes all the teachers and head teachers involved with a particular class or group of pupils, who evaluate their progress and, in their meeting, decide whether the individual pupil should be promoted to the next class or, as appropriate, receive final certification. The decisions of the *conseil de classe* cannot be appealed, provided that they are in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations.

In Type I education, pupils are assessed in terms both of the objective knowledge and skills they have acquired and of their ability to apply and make use of these. Assessment is a continuous and cumulative activity, which at the end of the year or cycle gives a more reliable idea of the pupil's capabilities. It is based both on regular tests and on direct observation of the pupil. Written, oral and practical final examinations are held twice a year, in December and June. They are designed to give the pupils practice in synthesising what they have learned. All these factors contribute to a global assessment. It is possible to repeat a year. The *conseil de classe* bases its decision to allow a pupil to move up to the next class, with or without restrictions, on the results of both work throughout the school year and of any examinations taken in December and June.

It can propose postponing a decision and requiring pupils to take qualifying examinations in September in those subjects in which their results are considered unsatisfactory.

A lower secondary school certificate is awarded to those pupils who are successful in passing the third year of general, technical or artistic education.

A qualification certificate is awarded at the end of the second cycle of the technical qualification or vocational branch, if the pupil passes the qualifying examination, which examines the first level of professional skills required for entering employment.

A lower secondary school certificate (*certificat d'enseignement secondaire - CES*) is also awarded under certain circumstances to pupils who successfully complete the fourth year of vocational training.

At the end of the second cycle, it is possible to choose either a year of advanced study or specialisation in a qualification branch, leading to a certificate of qualification, or a year of reorientation for those who wish to change branch and enter the third cycle.

Those pupils who successfully complete the third cycle of general or technical education in the transition branch receive an upper secondary school certificate.

At the end of the sixth year of technical education in the qualification branch, those pupils who pass their examinations receive a certificate of qualification, which permits them to enter employment in the field in which they have trained.

At the end of the third cycle of vocational training, a certificate of qualification is awarded to those who pass the qualifying examination which tests their aptitude to enter employment.

On the other hand, a seventh year of vocational training can be arranged for those who hold a lower secondary school certificate and a sixth year certificate of qualification. Success in this additional year leads to the upper secondary school certificate.

Similarly, a preparatory year for higher education and/or some years of advanced study or specialisation can be organised in the qualification branches.

Certificates for both types of education (reformed and traditional) are awarded under the responsibility of the schools concerned, and are then given official recognition by a homologation committee (*commission d'homologation*). Certificates of qualification are awarded under the responsibility of the schools by joint examining boards made up of teachers and of individuals active in society and working life and with relevant qualifications and experience. These certificates are not submitted to the homologation committee.

2. Secondary education - Type II

Type II education comprises two cycles of three years each and two branches of secondary education - general and technical. At the outset, pupils must choose between Latin and modern humanities. In the second cycle, there are several sections in each of these areas. It is only possible to transfer from one section to another under very strictly limited circumstances. Unsuccessful pupils can be directed towards the vocational branch from the second year.

The first cycle leads to the lower secondary school certificate. It is possible to extend this cycle by a fourth or fifth year of advanced study or qualification, which can lead to a certificate of qualification.

In assessing the pupils, main and subsidiary subjects are kept separate. Regular tests are organised throughout the year and there are examinations twice a year. The *conseil de classe* uses the overall results to determine whether a pupil should be allowed to proceed to the next class, whether he or she should repeat a class or should be directed to another branch.

Successful completion of the three years of the first cycle permits the pupil to proceed to the upper secondary cycle, which in turn leads to an upper secondary school certificate and a certificate of qualification. At the end of the upper secondary cycle, it is possible to opt for a year of advanced studies or specialisation.

The French Community examination board system, organised by the Ministry of Education, Research and Training, provides an alternative series of examinations leading to a certificate other than by the traditional paths of education provided in schools.

These examinations are therefore designed primarily for self-taught individuals and for those who have abandoned their studies earlier. Of course, these tests require a serious personal commitment as candidates must prepare for them on their own.

These examining boards can award:

- a general, technical, artistic or vocational lower secondary school certificate;
- a general, technical, artistic or vocational upper secondary school certificate;
- a certificate of aptitude to enter higher education.

B. THE FLEMISH COMMUNITY

Since 1989, the new general structure of secondary education in the Flemish Community comprises three cycles of two years each, and includes four sections:

- general education (*ASO - Algemeen Secundair Onderwijs*);
- technical education (*TSO - Technisch Secundair Onderwijs*);
- artistic education (*KSO - Kunstsecundair Onderwijs*); and
- vocational education (*BSO - Beroepssecundair Onderwijs*).

Each cycle is complete in itself. In the first cycle, the sections are not organised separately, and there is one common course, with the exception of the vocational section, in which pupils can be streamed into different courses as from the second year. Within the structure of the common basic course offered in the first cycle, schools can use a certain number of periods to concentrate on specific subject areas within the options available.

It is only from the third year, which corresponds to the beginning of the second cycle, that the three other sections are organised separately, each with a common basic curriculum and a variety of options.

Assessment is organised by the teachers themselves. The *conseil de classe* is responsible for preparing and administering the examinations. The aim is to assess the way in which pupils have mastered the knowledge and the skills required by the courses. The courses themselves, however, are developed by the organising bodies of the schools. They have total independence in this area as long as the courses conform to the "ultimate aims". The concept of "ultimate aims" was established by the Decree of the Flemish Community of 17 July 1991.

"Ultimate aims" refers to a series of objectives to be attained by the end of each level of education; these were developed by the Educational Development Service.

At the end of the third cycle of general, technical and artistic education, the pupil can obtain an upper secondary school certificate which grants entry to higher education. At the end of general education, a year of preparation for higher education can be arranged. A special seventh year of vocational training entitles the pupil to a certificate of upper secondary education validated by a homologation committee. In the technical, vocational and artistic branches, it is possible to opt for an additional year of advanced studies or specialisation.

II. PART-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

1. Part-time education

Part-time education is intended for pupils who are 16 years old and for 15-year old pupils who have already had two years of secondary education. Centres for part-time education offer a limited curriculum of general education and vocational training courses (15 class periods per week). This leads to an attendance certificate and possibly a certificate of qualification.

2. Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are available to 15-year-olds who have successfully finished two years of general or vocational secondary education or who have passed an entrance examination.

3. Recognised training courses

These courses are generally run by non-profit-making associations recognised and subsidised by the authorities. They lead to a vocational aptitude certificate and an apprenticeship certificate.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In the French and German-speaking Communities, a general or technical upper secondary school certificate (*certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur*, or *C.E.S.S.*) entitles the pupil to admission to short higher education courses. It is also possible to sit the preliminary examinations set by the examination boards of the Communities to qualify for entry to paramedical studies.

To be eligible for higher education at a university or for the so-called "long courses", a pupil must obtain a certificate of aptitude for higher education (*diplôme d'aptitude à accéder à l'enseignement supérieur*, or *D.A.E.S.*), which is awarded without examination by the *conseil de classe*. This certificate may be granted to pupils holding a *C.E.S.S.* who received a general or technical education in the transition branch or a technical education in the qualification branch. There are entrance examinations for certain university departments.

In the Flemish Community, as of the 1992/93 academic year, certificates of aptitude for higher education are no longer issued. For entry to any form of full-time higher education, only a secondary school certificate validated by a homologation committee or awarded by the Flemish Community's examining committee for full-time secondary education is required.

There is, however, an examination organised by the universities themselves for admission to civil engineering studies.

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DENMARK

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

All compulsory education is organised in a single system - the *Folkeskole* - with no distinction between primary and lower secondary school. Between the eighth and the tenth years of *Folkeskole*, certain subjects are offered at different levels. At the post-compulsory level, education is organised in separate branches.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education is optional and does not constitute "teaching" in the full sense of the word. Day nurseries are available for children between 0 and 3, nursery schools or recognised institutions for 3 to 7-year-olds and nursery classes for 5 to 7-year-olds. Only the nursery classes come under the Ministry of Education. Of all children between 5 and 7, 70% attend these classes full- or part-time. At age 6, 96% of all children attend nursery classes at the *Folkeskole*.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

There are nine years of compulsory education for children between the ages of 7 and 16. The *Folkeskole* constitutes a single continuous system with no distinction between the primary and lower secondary levels.

THE *FOLKESKOLE*

In the *Folkeskole*, pupils remain together as a class throughout their entire schooling. Each subject is taught by a different teacher. The teaching team generally follows the group or class for several years, but it can also change each year. Whenever possible, the system provides for at least one main teacher to stay with the same group of pupils throughout their entire schooling.

While the general framework of curriculum objectives is established by the Ministry centrally, the local authorities decide on content. Teachers enjoy great autonomy in determining the methodology and form of their teaching, which they endeavour to adapt to the needs of the individual child. Course content is discussed with the pupils in the context of the objectives fixed by law.

Assessment

Schools inform pupils and their parents regularly (at least twice a year) of the pupil's progress, but they do not give marks. Numerical marking is not introduced until the end of the period of compulsory education. Only in the three final (8th, 9th and 10th) years are marks given in those subjects in which the pupil will take a leaving certificate examination. Pupils may not repeat a class, promotion being automatic from one class to the next.

On leaving the *Folkeskole*, pupils receive a leaving certificate indicating the subjects taken, the marks for the year's work, and the results obtained in the examinations taken. There is no minimum mark and each subject is marked separately. The examination is optional. The pupils themselves decide whether or not to take it.

Written examinations are standardised and developed by the Ministry of Education. Oral examinations are carried out by the relevant teacher in the presence of a teacher from another school.

The pupils choose the subjects in which they wish to sit an examination. At the end of the 9th year of the *Folkeskole*, the leaving examination can be taken in 11 subjects, while at the end of the 10th year the so-called advanced leaving examination may be taken only in 5 subjects. Only those pupils who have taken the advanced course in the 10th year may sit this examination.

More than 95% of the 16-year-old age group receive the school-leaving certificate. It is more a certificate of completion of schooling than a vocational qualification.

Educational and vocational guidance

From age 14 to 16, during the 7th, 8th and 9th years of the *Folkeskole*, pupils have a minimum of 48 hours of guidance courses. The class teacher is responsible for developing the curriculum of these courses, with the assistance, if necessary, of a teacher counsellor.

Most pupils participate in work placements during their two final years of compulsory education (age 15 to 16). Finding work placements for pupils is a traditional function of the public vocational guidance service and is usually undertaken by the schools themselves.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Following the 9th year of the *Folkeskole*, pupils have several options. They can choose to stay on for a 10th year in the *Folkeskole*, to go on to the *Gymnasium*, or to go into initial vocational training.

Pupils who stay on in the 10th year in the *Folkeskole* have the same options, or they can take courses leading to the higher preparatory examination.

1. *Gymnasium*

Teaching is divided into two branches: languages and sciences. In addition there is a core curriculum common to both branches. This course lasts three years.

In addition to the compulsory subjects, each group of pupils receives approximately 20 hours of collective counselling on academic and vocational issues by counsellors in the course of the general education course (age 17 to 19).

Assessment of pupils' work is undertaken primarily by external examiners. At the end of the second year, pupils in the language group must pass an external written examination in English and those in the science group must take a mathematics examination. At the end of the 3rd year, each pupil must pass written examinations in Danish and in all higher level subjects, regardless of the stream chosen. In addition to these written tests, there are 5 or 6 oral examinations, giving a total of 10 examinations during the three year course. Written papers are marked by two external examiners.

The head of the Directorate for Upper Secondary Education determines the subjects in which the pupils in each class must sit oral examinations. The Directorate prepares a complete schedule for each school and appoints an external examiner for each subject and class. These are "indicative" tests to enable pupils to judge how well they know the subjects concerned.

In addition to these external assessments, pupils' work is assessed by the teachers three times in the course of each school year. At the end of each of the first two years, the teaching staff give their opinion on the promotion of the pupils to the next year. A pupil who has attended regularly can insist on going on without repeating the year, or re-sit failed examinations. This is for the pupil to decide (or the parents, in the case of minors). During the third year, examinations are held at local level. The results of these are taken into account when the teachers make their final assessment.

This three-year course leads to the upper secondary school leaving examination, the *studentereksamen*. Passing this final examination, which is set at national level, entitles the pupil to a certificate.

2. Higher Preparatory Examination Course (*HF*)

In order to qualify for this 2-year course, a pupil must have attended the *Folkeskole* for ten years and have passed the *Folkeskole* advanced leaving examination in Danish, mathematics, English and German. The *HF* course includes the common core subjects and a number of optional subjects. Success in the final examination gives pupil entry to higher education.

3. Initial vocational training

Following completion of the *Folkeskole*, pupils have a choice of three main forms of initial vocational training:

- basic vocational training;
- higher commercial courses (*HHX*);
- higher technical courses (*HTX*).

The main characteristic of the vocational training course is the combination of practical work experience with theoretical training in a technical or commercial school. On average, these courses take between three and four years and about two-thirds of the time is dedicated to on-the-job training.

Teachers continuously assess the pupils' work and effort, using both examinations and direct observation of their work in class. Most vocational training courses culminate in a final examination. Depending on the courses pupils follow, they take a professional qualification test, or an examination, or a combination of the two.

Courses leading to *HTX* and *HHX* are entirely theoretical and end in examinations. They give access both to employment and to higher education. Both courses take two years.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

To qualify for higher education, a pupil must hold either an upper secondary school leaving certificate or have passed the higher preparatory examination, or the higher commercial (*HHX*) or technical examination (*HTX*).

In individual cases, institutions of continuing education can require that applicants who have not taken these examinations show evidence of significant vocational experience or pass an entrance examination.

The Ministry of Education imposes restrictions on the numbers of admitted to most university and non-university institutions of higher education.

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GERMANY

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

The structure of the German education system is characterised by a common primary education followed by lower secondary education in different kinds of general schools, leading to various certificates and different branches of education. At the upper secondary level, pupils have a choice between courses of general education and other branches which lead to vocational qualifications.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Kindergarten is the traditional form of pre-school provision for children between the ages of 3 and 6. However, this service does not come under education jurisdiction, but under that of social services for children and young persons. Through play and other activities suited to their age, children develop their physical and mental faculties, learn to live in a group and in society, and become used to following a regular daily routine. In general, the children who attend *Kindergarten* or another pre-school institution are not expected to achieve any specific level of intellectual or other attainment.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

School attendance is compulsory for all children who have reached their sixth birthday. It usually lasts 12 years, 9 years of full-time general education (in four *Länder*, this period is extended to 10 years) and 3 years of part-time education in a vocational training school. Part-time vocational training is compulsory for those pupils who no longer wish to pursue full-time general or vocational education at the end of the period of compulsory general education.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

The primary school is the first stage of compulsory education and is common to all children for the first 4 years (in two *Länder*, for the first 6 years). The children usually have only one teacher during the first two years, but from the third year all subjects other than reading and writing - such as social and natural sciences, foreign languages and physical education - are taught by other teachers in order to prepare the pupils for secondary school, where they have specialist teachers for each subject.

Assessment

During the first two years of primary school, the pupil is assessed by means of a general report, in which progress and ability in each subject are noted. Only from the end of the third year, at the earliest, do pupils receive a report card with marks, in which their attainments are assessed more in relation to the level of the rest of the class.

All pupils are promoted automatically from the first to the second year of primary school. From the second year on, whether they are promoted from one year to the next (or made to repeat the year) depends on their level of attainment.

There is no formal certificate to mark the completion of primary school. Pupils must continue to attend school until they have completed their compulsory education.

Guidance

Different *Länder* have different regulations governing transfer from primary to secondary school. The decision as to the kind of education to be followed in lower secondary school is decided in part during their fourth and fifth years at school, or at the end of the sixth year. During the final year of primary school (normally the pupil's fourth year), those concerned in the school consult with the pupil's parents and determine by vote the type of secondary school the pupil will attend. Depending on the *Land*, the decision is made by the parents, by the school or by the school inspectorate on the basis of this vote. In recent years, the parents' right to decide the direction of their children's education has been tending to increase in importance.

LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The structure of lower secondary education (from the fifth or the seventh to the ninth or tenth years) is that of differentiated courses provided following primary education and organised according to the certificates and qualifications to which they lead. In most of the *Länder*, the different schools are:

- the *Hauptschule* (general lower secondary school) which offers its pupils a basic general secondary education; after obtaining their school-leaving certificate, pupils may pursue vocational training or even general education.

- the *Realschule* (general lower secondary school leading to upper secondary school) which offers its pupils an extended general education; after obtaining their school-leaving certificate, pupils may pursue vocational or general studies.

- the *Gymnasium* (general lower and upper secondary school leading to the *Abitur*) which offers its pupils a general education in greater depth; after obtaining their school-leaving certificate, pupils may go on to either higher education or even to vocational training.

- the *Gesamtschule* (comprehensive school which combines or merges the different traditional forms of lower secondary school); in certain *Länder*, integrated *Gesamtschulen* offer the 11th to 13th years of the *Gymnasium* in addition to lower secondary education.

In certain *Länder*, lower secondary schools include (in the fifth and sixth years) a phase of guidance or preparation, whatever the type of school chosen, and there are schools which offer some subject branches usually offered by both the *Hauptschule* and the *Realschule* - the *Mittelschule* (middle school), *Regelschule* (regular school), *Sekundarschule* (secondary school), *Integrierte Haupt- und Realschule* (school integrating *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*), *Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule* (school combining *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*), and *Regionale Schule* (regional school).

The principle underlying the different forms of lower secondary education and their various courses is to offer a basic general education adapted to the pupils' individual needs and aptitudes. This education aims at developing pupils' intellectual, physical and personal capacities. The system is sufficiently flexible to allow pupils to pass from one branch to another at the end of the preparatory cycle.

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Basic general education consists of a common core of compulsory subjects. The standard required of pupils in these subjects varies according to the type of school and/or the subject. In addition to this common core of required courses, there are optional courses in which pupils may choose advanced courses or courses in additional subjects, according to their personal interests, aptitudes and preferences. There are also voluntary optional courses.

Regardless of how they are organised, the fifth and sixth years constitute a particular stage of development, observation and guidance, during which pupils should receive as much counselling as possible on the subjects in which they wish to specialise, decide which courses they wish to follow, and find out which certificates and qualifications they will be entitled to.

From the seventh year, the different schools and branches of study begin to diverge in terms of the subjects they offer, the aptitudes required and the school-leaving certificates at which the pupils are aiming.

From the seventh to the ninth or tenth years, the structure of the courses and their relevance to the final certificates increase in importance in terms both of pupils' choices of options in upper secondary school and of their choices of career. However, it still possible for pupils to alter the subject or branch they have chosen.

At lower secondary level, most schools offer either one or several types of courses. Those schools which offer only a single type, generally the *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gymnasium*, target their entire curriculum towards the acquisition of a particular certificate.

The schools which offer several types organise pupils either in separate classes, according to the types of certificate they are aiming at, or in mixed-ability classes for some subjects. These generally include the *Gesamtschule*, *Mittelschule*, *Regelschule*, *Sekundarschule*, *Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule*, *Integrierte Haupt- und Realschule* and *Regionale Schule*.

In schools which offer several types of courses, classes are streamed by level of ability. Such streamed classes are organised in mathematics and the first foreign language from the seventh year, in German in the seventh or, at the latest, eighth year, and in the natural sciences (at least in physics and chemistry) from the ninth year at the latest.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment by the teaching team in all types of school. Pupils can be required to repeat the class each year, and promotion from one year to the next is on the basis of their results and personal development during the year.

At the end of the ninth year, pupils in all *Länder* have the chance to take a first certificate, known in most *Länder* as a *Hauptschulabschluß*, which certifies that they have completed their general education. It is only awarded to those pupils who have obtained at least pass marks in all subjects. The *Hauptschulabschluß* is often used for entry to the "dual system" of vocational training. Subject to certain conditions, it can also qualify a pupil to enter a *Berufsfachschule* (full-time vocational school) and to take a year of basic vocational training (*Berufsgrundbildungsjahr*). It is also a prerequisite for subsequent entry to an advanced vocational school (*Fachschule*) or an institution of continuing education for adults who wish to obtain a school-leaving certificate later in life.

At the end of the tenth year, pupils in all *Länder* can receive an intermediate level certificate known as a *Realschulabschluß* or *Mittlerer Schulabschluß*. In a *Realschule*, this certificate is only awarded to pupils who pass in all subjects at the end of the tenth year. In schools offering different types of curricula, the *Mittlerer Schulabschluß* is awarded at the end of the tenth year to those pupils who have taken the courses for this certificate and have obtained at least pass marks in all subjects. In the other types of lower secondary schools, pupils must meet specific requirements to obtain it. The certificate gives entry to other courses, such as those offered by the *Berufsfachschule* or the *Fachoberschule* (a two-year technical secondary school leading to entry to a *Fachhochschule*). It is also used for entry to the dual system of vocational education.

Entry to the upper classes in a *Gymnasium* is granted only to those pupils who pass in all subjects at the end of the tenth year in a *Gymnasium* or in the *Gymnasium* branch of a *Gesamtschule*. Under certain circumstances, entry can also be obtained from other branches. In this way a *Realschulabschluß*, a *Mittlerer Schulabschluß*, or a certificate obtained from a vocational school, such as a *Berufsaufbauschule* (vocational extension school), a *Berufsfachschule* or a *Fachschule*, can also lead to the upper classes of the *Gymnasium*.

II. UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

1. General education in the upper classes of the *Gymnasium*

The upper classes of *Gymnasium* are generally the 11th, 12th and 13th years of education (or the 11th and 12th in certain new *Länder*). Subjects are classified under three areas of study:

- languages, literature and arts;
- social sciences;
- mathematics, natural and technical sciences.

Each of these areas must be represented in the pupils' timetables until the end of their education in the *Gymnasium* and be presented in the school-leaving examination, the *Abitur*. Religion and sport are usually added to the compulsory subjects. Within these limits, pupils can choose the subjects in which they wish to specialise.

Success in the *Abitur* entitles the pupil to a secondary school leaving certificate (*Abiturzeugnis*). This examination covers four subjects, two advanced and one supplementary subject to be examined in written and sometime oral examinations, and a fourth subject to be examined only orally. All three subject areas must be represented. In an attempt to standardise the requirements of the examinations, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* has established uniform criteria for 33 different subjects. Pupils who pass the *Abitur* receive a certificate which entitles them to enter any branch of higher education (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*). As four of the new *Länder* administer this kind of examination after 12 years of schooling, certificates which are awarded there are valid throughout Germany, at least for a transitional period up to 1996.

2. Initial vocational training in full-time vocational schools

Berufsfachschulen are full-time schools which prepare pupils for employment or provide them with initial vocational training while at the same time continuing their general education. These schools do not award a vocational qualification. If certain conditions are met, however, attendance at this kind of school can be counted as the first year of vocational training in the "dual system".

To be admitted to this school, pupils must hold, depending on the kind of training they desire, either a school-leaving certificate awarded by a *Hauptschule* or a *Realschule* or a qualification equivalent to the *Mittlerer Schulabschluß*. The period of training at a *Berufsfachschule* depends mainly on the intended career specialisation and the pupil's objectives, but it lasts at least one year and it generally leads to a final examination.

Those *Berufsfachschulen* which have a two-year curriculum, and require entrants to have at least a leaving certificate from a *Hauptschule*, can award a diploma equivalent to the certificate awarded by the *Realschule* (*Mittlerer Schulabschluß*). Pupils who take additional courses and

who have a qualification from a *Realschule* can obtain other certificates from these schools as well (most notably to qualify for entrance to a *Fachhochschule*).

To attend a *Fachoberschule*, a pupil must have a leaving certificate from a *Realschule* or a certificate considered equivalent (*Mittlerer Schulabschluß*). Over a period of two years, the general and specialised technical curriculum of the *Realschule* provides theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the chosen specialisation. This training qualifies the pupil for entry to a *Fachhochschule*.

In contrast to the *Gymnasium*, a vocational or technical *Gymnasium* (*Berufliches Gymnasium/Fachgymnasium*) does not have junior classes at the lower secondary level. In certain *Länder*, it is organised like the upper years of the *Gymnasium*, with an emphasis on technical subjects, and lasts for three years. To be admitted, a pupil must hold a leaving certificate from a *Realschule* or a certificate considered equivalent, at a level to qualify for admission to the upper classes of the *Gymnasium*. The vocational or technical *Gymnasium* prepares pupils for entry to higher education in all subjects.

In certain *Länder*, it is possible to acquire more than one qualification from a vocational or technical *Gymnasium* (courses leading to a double qualification). Generally, this means that it is possible to obtain both a leaving certificate qualifying for entry to any institution of higher education, or to a *Fachhochschule*, and a vocational qualification at the same time. The courses leading to double qualifications generally take four years in upper secondary school and involve two separate examinations (a final examination for the vocational qualification and one for the *Abitur*).

A *Fachschule* is an upper secondary school which builds on pupils' initial vocational qualification to provide them with advanced vocational training and further general education. These schools train specialised middle-level staff to manage enterprises independently in their chosen fields (for example in agriculture or home economics), to train junior staff in their field or to assume relatively important responsibilities within clearly defined areas.

To be admitted to a *Fachschule*, pupils must normally have completed the relevant vocational training or provide evidence of work experience in their field. Furthermore, it is generally expected of pupils who wish to enter a *Fachschule* that they have had additional vocational experience. Depending on the course of studies chosen, the *Fachschule* curriculum lasts for one, two or three years. A *Fachschule* with a two-year curriculum offers a range of approximately 90 specialisations in engineering, economics or management. It leads to a final examination recognised by the State and gives the successful candidate the right to use a title such as "State-certified engineer".

The assessment of a pupil's competence is as much an educational as an administrative act. It is carried out under the professional responsibility of the teacher, in accordance with legal rules and regulations founded on fundamental legal principles. Assessment is based primarily on the pupil's performance in class - written work, oral participation and practical exercises. Throughout the year, the pupil must hand in written assignments. The teachers' demands correspond to those of the curriculum. Pupils' oral participation is measured in terms of the answers they give in class, and is also assessed. Finally, there are practical exercises, primarily in subjects like sport, music, art, etc.

Pupils' results are assessed according to a marking system agreed by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. This involves a six point scale, from "very good" to "fail".

In the upper level of the *Gymnasium*, performance is assessed on the basis of a more detailed marking system[134]. Pupils' results are recorded twice a year in a school report, at the end of the first and the second semesters. Whether pupils move up to the next year depends on the level of their marks at the end of the year; pupils must achieve an average of at least "satisfactory" in all relevant subjects. In general, marks of "unsatisfactory" and "fail" can be compensated by marks of "very good" and "good" in other subjects.

III. PART-TIME EDUCATION

When they have completed their compulsory education, the great majority of young people aged 15 to 20 follow sandwich courses. This is called the "dual system" in German, because it involves training in two different places - in a *Berufsschule* and in the work place. The duration of this training ranges from two to three and a half years, but it usually lasts three years. In 1991, there were vocational training courses in the "dual system" in 374 recognised occupations.

1. Initial vocational training in a *Berufsschule*

The *Berufsschule* (part-time vocational school) is an independent training centre in the dual system of vocational training. It collaborates on an equal footing with the others engaged in initial vocational training. The role of the *Berufsschule* is to provide pupils with general and vocational education, giving special attention to meeting the requirements of vocational training. Thus it provides young people with basic and specialised training while permitting them to continue their general education.

The *Berufsschule* is attended by pupils undergoing initial vocational training and by some who have left the *Hauptschule* or another general education school and have started work but are still required to attend school.

Vocational training in the "dual system" ends with a final examination, which is designed to assess pupils' competence to engage in the occupation they have learned and to ensure that they do not require an extension of their period of induction or apprenticeship. Pupils who pass this examination receive a leaving certificate, which, depending on their level of competence, can include a *Hauptschule* or a *Realschule* leaving certificate. Together with a certificate of vocational competence or a skilled worker certificate proving that the pupil has successfully completed vocational and on-the-job training (*Facharbeiterbrief* or *Gesellenbrief*), the *Berufsschule* certificate entitles the holder to admission to advanced vocational training, for example at a *Fachschule*.

Pupils can choose to take their first year of basic vocational training either in a full-time vocational school or in a combination of part-time schooling and on-the-job training (the "dual system") in what is called the "basic vocational training year" (*Berufsgrundbildungsjahr*).

2. Initial vocational training in a firm, outwith the school system

Employers in the private and public sectors, the liberal professions, and individuals also provide training places for initial vocational training outwith the school system. This training is based on a contract of initial vocational training between the training firm and the trainee.

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134 The 6-point scale is converted to marks in the following manner:
1 is equivalent to 15/14/13 points
2 is equivalent to 12/11/10 points
3 is equivalent to 9/8/7 points
4 is equivalent to 6/5/4 points
5 is equivalent to 3/2/1 points
6 is equivalent to 0 points

The organisation of initial vocational training in firms is governed by the provisions of the law on vocational training and by craft training regulations. The content and duration of training and the examination requirements are set out in regulations of the Federal Government.

Initial vocational training in firms leads to a final examination. The authorities responsible for administering these examinations are, in the case of the crafts and trades, the Chambers of Crafts and Trades; for occupations in commerce and industry, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry; for agricultural occupations, the Ministries of Food, Agriculture and Forestry in some *Länder* and the Chambers of Agriculture in others. The trainee must pass this examination in order to be employed as a journeyman (*Geselle*), an assistant (*Gehilfe*), or a skilled worker (*Facharbeiter*) and to be entitled to the corresponding rate of pay. The examination also entitles the pupil to become a master craftsman after several years of vocational experience and passing a master's examination. Finally, it also entitles trainees to attend certain *Fachschulen* to receive advanced vocational training or evening *Gymnasien* and *Kollegs*, which offer adults courses at the upper secondary level and the possibility of gaining the *Abitur*, which entitles them to enter higher education.

IV. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The final school leaving certificate is required for entry to higher education. However, a distinction has to be made between the following types of qualification for admission:

- The general school leaving certificate (*allgemeine Hochschulreife*) confers the right to enter all institutions of higher education without restrictions regarding subjects or courses.

- The subject-restricted school leaving certificate (*fachgebundene Hochschulreife*) confers the right to enter universities or equivalent institutions of higher education for specific courses of study, or the *Fachhochschule*.

- The technical secondary school leaving certificate (*Fachhochschulreife*) confers the right of admission to the *Fachhochschule* and to equivalent courses of study in the "comprehensive universities" (*Universitäten - Gesamthochschulen*).

The first two certificates are usually granted after 13 years of education, i.e. at the end of the upper secondary cycle of the *Gymnasium*, or after certain types of vocational courses at the upper secondary level which also lead to a general higher education entrance qualification. Even though this certificate is awarded after 12, and not 13 years, of education in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia, its holders will be allowed to enter to institutions of higher education during a transitional period up to 1996.

Evening *Gymnasien* for working adults and *Kollegs* for adults who have completed an initial vocational training course also lead to a final school leaving certificate. This certificate can also be obtained by passing a special *Abitur* for individuals who did not receive their preparation at school (*Nicht-Schülerprüfung*) or the entrance examination for particularly gifted working adults (*Begabtenprüfung*).

The final technical school leaving qualification is awarded after the twelfth year of studies in a *Fachoberschule* (two-year technical secondary school preparing for admission to a *Fachoberschule*). This certificate can also be obtained at a *Berufsfachschule* or a *Fachschule*, whose primary objective is to give vocational qualifications, provided the pupils take an additional programme of education.

In certain *Länder*, pupils who hold a vocational qualification but do not have a final school leaving certificate entitling them to enter higher education have several options if they still wish to pursue their studies. They must demonstrate the knowledge and the ability necessary for their studies under an entry procedure (e.g. by enrolling temporarily in classes on a trial basis) or by passing the entrance examination of an institution of higher education (ranking examination, aptitude test and interview). However, entry to higher education on the sole basis of a vocational qualification is generally limited to study in the specific field of the vocational qualification.

To attend courses at an academy of music and arts, it is necessary to hold a final school leaving certificate and demonstrate relevant ability. In most of the *Länder*, pure art courses (i.e. not those courses for art teachers) also accept pupils without this certificate, as long as they can demonstrate exceptional artistic talent. This exception also applies to those who wish to pursue advanced sports studies. They too have to take an aptitude test. These tests, however, are not required by all institutions offering advanced sports courses.

Under the Federal Constitution (*Grundgesetz*), all Germans have the right to choose their occupation, their place of employment and where they receive their education. For this reason, there is no limit on the numbers of students admitted to the great majority of courses.

When the number of applicants exceeds the number of study places available, however, admission is currently restricted in certain fields (e.g. medicine, architecture, and economics) throughout the Federal Republic. The available places are allocated through a central bureau, following two selection procedures. In addition, there are some local restrictions on admissions in certain other areas of study in some institutions of higher education.

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GREECE

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

Nursery and primary schools are grouped together for administrative purposes. There is a common core curriculum at the primary and lower secondary levels. When they have completed their compulsory schooling, pupils can choose from a variety of branches of upper secondary education.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education is optional. Children are accepted who reach the age of 3 1/2 by 1 October of the first year of attendance until they are 5 1/2. Nursery school attendance is to become progressively compulsory in certain regions defined by ministerial decree.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Education is compulsory for a period of 9 years. It begins in the year in which the child reaches the age of five and a half by no later than 1 October, and continues until age 15.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education lasts six years. Pupils are assigned to classes by age, except in the smallest schools. In general, the primary teacher teaches all subjects and can change group or class every year. In 30% of schools, this teacher is replaced by secondary school teachers for music, foreign languages, art, and physical education lessons.

Assessment

The teacher regularly assesses the children's progress throughout the year. There are no examinations in the first four years.

During the final two years, the class teacher prepares and gives a test of comprehension each term, but the results of these tests do not have to be taken into account in the general assessment at the end of the year. Pupils move automatically from one class to the next. The law provides for support teaching for pupils in difficulty. Pupils missing more than half of a school year must sit an examination. Failure in such an examination will result in the pupil having to repeat the year.

On completion of their primary education, pupils receive a leaving certificate giving entry to lower secondary school. There is no final examination.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Pupils who have completed the six years of primary school are admitted automatically to the *Gymnasio*, without taking any examination.

The curriculum is the same for all pupils. During the whole 3-year period, pupils participate in 45 courses of careers education (one hour per week for 16 weeks), designed to prepare them for their future choices.

Every three months, teachers assess pupils' comprehension of course material primarily by means of oral and written tests; assessment of each subject lasts one hour.

The final mark for the year takes into account the results of both the oral and the written tests and is based both on the term marks and on comprehensive examinations held in January and June.

Promotion to the next class is dependent on the marks obtained in each subject in the term tests. A pupil may pass to the next year if he or she receives 10/20 in every subject or an overall average of 13/20. Final decisions on pupils' promotion and on their ranking when they leave the *Gymnasio* are taken by the Teachers' Council. The Council also decides, on the basis of the pupil's results in the tests held every three months, whether or not to award the leaving certificate, called the *Apolytirio Gymnasiou*.

Re-sit examinations are organised by the schools for those pupils who finish the *Gymnasio* without receiving the leaving certificate.

This leaving certificate gives entry to all types of *Lykeia* and all technical-vocational schools.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

1. *Lykeia*

There are both daytime courses, lasting three years, and evening courses, which last four years. There are several types of *Lykeia* which pupils can enter without taking any entrance examination.

The General *Lykeio* offers a common course of general education during the first two years. Later, optional subjects in four branches are introduced to complement the general courses. The first branch consists of modern Greek, mathematics, physics and chemistry. The second adds biology and anthropology to these courses. The third comprises modern Greek, ancient Greek, Latin and history, and the fourth offers modern Greek, mathematics, history, sociology and political economy.

The Technical-Vocational *Lykeio* offers a common course in the first year, followed by a division into sections according to optional subjects chosen in the first, second and fourth branches. It is also possible for pupils to choose a specialisation which permits them to enter employment.

The Comprehensive *Lykeio* was first introduced in 1984. Its schools have a common curriculum of general, technical and vocational courses in the first year, and then divide into different branches of education.

The Classical *Lykeio* has a common curriculum during the first two years, followed by a third year comprising general subjects and optional subjects from the third and fourth branches.

The Ecclesiastical *Lykeio* only admits boys. Its structure is the same as that in the general *Lykeio*, except that all pupils must choose the third option branch and the curriculum devotes more time to theology.

Careers education courses are included in the first year of the Technical-Vocational *Lykeio* and the first two years of the General *Lykeio*.

Pupils are assessed at the end of each term on the basis of oral and written tests. At the end of each school year, pupils take national written examinations in every subject in order to move up to the next year or to obtain the school leaving certificate. The average of the marks received in the oral and written examinations is the mark the pupil will receive for the year in each subject.

The Teachers' Council takes the final decisions on promotion to the next class and on the award of certificates. The school awards the leaving certificate taking into account the marks pupils have received throughout their schooling.

Pupils who complete any type of *Lykeio* receive the *Apolytirio lykeiou*.

2. Technical-Vocational Schools

Technical-Vocational School day courses last two years while training in evening classes lasts three years.

Pupils are assessed as in the *Lykeio*. Successful pupils receive a certificate called *Ptyhio*, which entitles them to enter the first year of any type of *Lykeio* or the second year of the Technical-Vocational or Comprehensive *Lykeio*.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is provided by universities, Higher Technical Education Institutions (*TEI*), or institutions of higher ecclesiastical studies.

After obtaining an upper secondary school certificate, pupils wishing to enter higher education must sit a national entrance examination in the subjects they wish to pursue in higher education. This examination is generally in the subjects the pupils has chosen during the final year at the *Lykeio*. Admission is based on the ranking in this examination.

A limited number of places in the *TEI* (25%) are offered without entrance examination to pupils leaving the Technical-Vocational *Lykeio* and 4.5% of the pupils leaving the pre-vocational section of the Comprehensive *Lykeio*. These places are allocated to pupils on the basis of their marks at the *Lykeio*.

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SPAIN

The Spanish education system is in the process of being completely reorganised following the passing in 1990 of the *LOGSE* (Basic law on the general structure and organisation of the education system). This reform will be implemented gradually and should be completed in the 1999/2000 school year.

It is useful therefore to examine the education system both before and after the reform.

THE PRE-REFORM EDUCATION SYSTEM

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

Compulsory education, called *Educación General Básica* (*EGB*) or basic general education, is divided into several multi-annual cycles. When they have completed this, pupils can choose to pursue general education or vocational education.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The *Jardin de Infancia* (nursery school) and the *Escuela de Párvulos* (infant school) are available for children aged 2 to 3 and 4 to 5 respectively. Attendance is optional. They are administered by a large number of public and private bodies.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education lasts for 8 years, starting at age 6 and ending at age 14.

This schooling comprises three cycles - a lower cycle lasting two years, an intermediate cycle which includes the third, fourth and fifth years, and an upper cycle, made up of the sixth, seventh and eighth years (from age 11 to 14).

The subjects are grouped into curricular areas, and objectives called *niveles basicos de referencia* (basic reference levels) are set for each cycle. The pupils are assigned to classes by age and there is one teacher for all subjects, except in the upper cycle, when each subject is taught by a specialist teacher. Generally, the same teacher remains with the group or class throughout a whole cycle.

Assessment

Assessment is continuous and the teacher measures each pupil's progress essentially in terms of his or her own potential. Marks are given at the end of each cycle, and classes cannot be repeated except at the end of the cycle.

At the beginning of the lower cycle, the teacher makes a preliminary assessment of each pupil's personal situation and basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic). Three times a year, the teacher notes the results of the pupil's work in each subject in a register with comments such as "could do better" or "satisfactory progress". The final mark in each subject, using the terms "excellent", "very

good", "good", "satisfactory", and "unsatisfactory", serves as the basis for the overall mark at the end of the cycle. A satisfactory command of basic skills in the Castilian language and in mathematics is required for pupils to move up to the intermediate cycle, otherwise they must remain in the lower cycle for an additional year.

In the intermediate cycle, pupils are assessed in the same way as in the lower cycle. Pupils who do not receive a positive mark for the lower cycle as a whole attend support classes during the summer holiday. Moreover, to move on to the next cycle it is not enough just to gain a sufficient mastery of the basic skills; pupils must also receive a positive mark for all their subjects taken together.

At the end of each year in the upper cycle, pupils who have not obtained a positive overall mark must take an examination in the subjects they did not pass if they are to move up to the next year. A pupil who does not receive a positive mark at the end of a year may have remedial work imposed or (after consulting the pupil's parents) be required to repeat the year.

After eight years of compulsory education, pupils who have been successful in the three cycles of basic general education (*EGB*) receive the School Graduate Certificate (*Graduado Escolar*), which entitles them to enter upper secondary school. There is no examination for this certificate. Otherwise, pupils may continue their education in institutions of basic general education and sit an examination called *Prueba de Madurez* in the subjects they failed. These examinations are prepared and assessed by teachers in the individual schools. Pupils aged 16, who have still failed to obtain the *Graduado Escolar* certificate, receive the School Attendance Certificate (*Certificado de Escolaridad*), which only entitles them to take up vocational training.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

General basic education (*Educación General Básica*) is followed by several years of upper secondary education (*Enseñanzas Medias*), which comprise two categories, general upper secondary education and vocational training.

1. General Upper Secondary Education (*Bachillerato Unificado Polivalente - BUP*)

This is a three-year course which prepares pupils for university entrance. Pupils are assessed continuously in public "accredited" schools (i.e. schools allowed to teach over all subject areas). At the end of each year, pupils receive an overall mark which is determined by all their teachers. If pupils receive unsatisfactory marks in any subject, they can re-sit in examinations in June and September. In an "approved" private centre (which does not have as much scope as the accredited schools), these two examinations are assessed by an examination board made up of teachers from that school and the public school with which it is linked. Pupils who fail in June can resit the subjects they failed in September. If they fail a second time, in more than one or two subjects, they must repeat the year.

2. University Orientation Course (*Curso de Orientación Universitaria - COU*)

After the three years of general upper secondary school (*BUP*), pupils who wish to go on to university must pass a one-year pre-university orientation course. Assessment procedures are much the same as for the *BUP*. They follow certain specific rules. If pupils receive negative marks in more than three subjects on the second examination in September, they must repeat the year. Pupils who fail in fewer than three subjects must re-enrol in the *COU* to attend remedial courses. It is possible to enrol for the course a maximum of three times.

3. **Vocational Training (*Formación profesional*)**

There are two levels of vocational training, *FPI* and *FPII*, which last for two and three years respectively. Each level offers both general education and specialised training.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment. They receive a mark at the end of each assessment period. If they pass all subjects in a certain field, they receive an overall mark for that. A negative mark in one subject requires them to take remedial courses. The final mark for the year (an average of the different assessments) is based on the marks received in each of these fields.

Successful pupils receive an assistant technician's certificate (*Técnico Auxiliar*) at the end of the first level of vocational training. Those whose overall mark is unsatisfactory, however, receive a school attendance certificate (*Certificado de Escolaridad*).

The technician's certificate entitles pupils to enter the second level of vocational training (*FPII*), the second year of *BUP*, or employment.

Pupils who successfully complete the second level of vocational training receive a specialist technician's certificate (*Técnico Especialista*). This certificate gives access either to employment or to the *COU*, which leads to university education, or directly to a university department offering courses related to their vocational training.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

To enter university, pupils must have passed the *COU* and the aptitude examinations set by the university which they wish to attend (*Prueba de Aptitud para el Acceso a la Universidad*).

These results are valid nationally; passing the examination in one university gives right of entry to any other university.

THE POST-REFORM EDUCATION SYSTEM

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

All compulsory schooling is being organised in multi-annual cycles. Primary school will lead to lower secondary school, which will be based on a common curriculum. Different branches will not be available until the post-compulsory upper secondary level.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education remains optional and will be divided into two cycles - from birth to age 3, and from 3 years to 6 years old. Since 1989/90, there is a course for 3-year-olds.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Since the reform of the education system (*LOGSE*) in 1990, compulsory education has been extended by two years. It begins at the age of 6 and ends at age 16 instead of 14.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Lasting 6 years, it is divided into three 2-year cycles, for 6-8, 8-10 and 10-12-year-olds. Pupils are generally assigned to classes by age and remain in the same group throughout primary school. In rural schools, for practical reasons, classes include pupils of different ages. The class teacher takes the same group for a whole cycle and generally teaches all subjects, although there may be other teachers for classes in foreign languages, music and physical education.

Assessment

Assessment is continuous and is based on the pupil's achievements throughout the cycle. Pupils' educational performance is measured against the objectives set for the end of each cycle. In principle, pupils move automatically from one cycle to the next and are only allowed to repeat a class under exceptional circumstances. If a pupil's results turn out to be too poor, the head teacher and class teacher may - after obtaining the opinion of all the teachers, the local educational psychology team, the parents and the inspectors - decide to make the pupil repeat the class. A pupil may not repeat more than once in primary school, and pupils who are made to repeat must be given individual help.

There is no final examination or certificate at the end of primary education.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Lasting 4 years, secondary education is divided into two cycles of 2 years each. The first cycle comprises a common core curriculum and some optional subjects. In the second cycle, there are more optional subjects but they do not determine the pupil's future direction.

Vocational training is included at this level in the form of general technical education for all pupils, together with a few optional subjects. This curriculum aims to provide pupils with the knowledge and basic skills indispensable for a wide variety of careers.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment throughout the cycles. Pupils are promoted automatically from one year to the next, but in exceptional cases a pupil who has not achieved the objectives set for a cycle may be made to repeat at the end of the first or second cycles.

At the end of compulsory secondary school, pupils who have achieved satisfactory results are awarded a certificate called *Graduado en Educación Secundaria*. The certificate is accompanied by a report on the subjects studied and recommendations for the pupil's further career. This certificate gives access to the *Bachillerato* and to specialised vocational training at intermediate level.

A certificate is awarded by the school to all pupils, whether or not they have achieved the objectives of secondary education. It mentions the years attended and the results obtained in each subject, along with non-binding recommendations for the pupil's future career.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

At this level of education, the reforms are only beginning to be implemented. The first year was introduced early in certain schools, in 1992. It is therefore difficult to be specific about its concrete implementation at this point.

1. The *Bachillerato*

The *Bachillerato* is a 2-year course, subdivided into four main branches - technology, humanities and social sciences, natural and health sciences, and arts. A common core syllabus is provided in all four sections in addition to the optional subjects. The pupil chooses a specific subject area in each of these categories, which serves as the basis for assessment. All types of *Bachillerato* require pupils to acquire a foreign language and basic technical skills. Each school will offer at least two of these types of *Bachillerato*.

Pupils will be assessed by subject area, in the light of the objectives and assessment criteria of the course. To move up to the second year of the *Bachillerato*, the pupil must not have received unsatisfactory marks in more than two subjects. At the end of the second year, pupils who have received unsatisfactory marks in more than three subjects will have to repeat the year. However, pupils may not take more than four years to complete the course. To receive the *Bachillerato* certificate, pupils must pass in every subject.

2. Intermediate vocational training

Vocational training, as planned by the reform, will be offered at an intermediate and a higher level after completion of compulsory education. If they have a school leaving certificate, pupils can enter the intermediate level at the end of compulsory secondary school. If they do not have this certificate, they must pass tests organised by the education authorities.

Higher vocational training will be open to pupils who have passed all subjects in the *Bachillerato* relevant to the branch they have chosen. Candidates aged 20 and older who do not fulfil these requirements can still attend these courses if they pass entrance examinations demonstrating their ability or work experience.

The diploma obtained at the end of higher vocational training will give direct entry to certain university courses in the same field.

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FRANCE

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

Education is organised in multi-annual cycles to enable the teachers to adapt their teaching methods to the learning pace of each pupil and thus improve continuity. All pupils follow a common core curriculum throughout primary and lower secondary education. Different branches are introduced at the upper secondary level when the pupils are about 15 years old.

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION: NURSERY SCHOOLS (*ÉCOLES MATERNELLES*)

Nursery school constitutes the first learning cycle. It provides optional education to children aged 2 to 6 years, generally organised by age into three sections, a lower section for 2 to 4-year-olds, a middle section for 4 to 5-year-olds, and a upper section for 5 to 6-year-olds. Nursery schools are attended by more than a third of all two year olds and by almost all children (99%) aged three.

To provide a smooth transition from the pre-primary to the primary level, the upper section of nursery school is part of the fundamentals of learning cycle, which continues in the preparatory course and the first year of the elementary course (the first two years of primary school). The teaching team decides whether and when to introduce the children to activities at the "elementary" level on the basis of each child's abilities.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory schooling comprises ten years, starting at 6 and ending at 16 years.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

This lasts for five years and is subdivided into two cycles:

- the basic learning cycle (*cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux*), which begins in the upper section of nursery school and continues for two years at the primary level in the preparatory course (*CP*) and the first year of the elementary course (*CE 1*);
- the consolidation cycle (*cycle d'approfondissements*), which lasts for three years and includes the second year of the elementary course (*CE 2*) and two years of the intermediate course (*CM 1* and *CM 2*).

One teacher is responsible for the group or class and for teaching all subjects during a whole school year. The teacher generally does not follow the same group or class from one year to the next. A team of teachers (*conseil des maîtres de cycle*) is responsible for each cycle.

Assessment

Skills to be acquired in each cycle have been defined. These include both disciplinary and general skills in relation to the children's attitudes, basic concepts of space and time, and learning habits. In addition, special emphasis is given to the acquisition of language skills.

The teacher or teaching team carries out systematic continuous assessment of the pupil's achievements, but pupils do not sit an examination in order to pass from one class to the next. Especially from the fourth year of primary school (intermediate course), continuous assessment of pupils can take the form of written tests. The pupils' progress, however, is assessed on the basis of their work throughout the whole year.

The results of these regular assessments are noted in the pupil's school record (*livret scolaire*), which serves as a medium of communication among the teachers and between the teachers and the parents, and which follows any pupil who changes school. In addition, teachers note suggestions in the school record concerning how long pupils should remain in a cycle and whether or not they should be allowed to move up to the following cycle.

Pupils cannot be made to repeat a class during a cycle. The *conseil des maîtres de cycle* (teaching team) takes the decision on each pupil's progress through the cycle, based on the recommendation of the pupil's teacher. The amount of time spent in each cycle can be increased or reduced by one year. This *conseil* may examine a pupil's case at the parents' request or on the recommendation of specialist staff who have been monitoring the pupil, or of the school doctor.

A written recommendation concerning the pupil's promotion is sent to the parents, who must respond within 15 days or the recommendation is considered accepted. The parents can appeal, stating their grounds to an *Académie* Inspector, director of the national education service at *Département* level, whose decision is final.

At the beginning of the consolidation cycle of primary school, national tests are held to evaluate the pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. The aim is to assist the teacher to detect pupils' weaknesses from the beginning of the school year and to tackle them by adopting appropriate teaching methods and forming remedial groups.

There is no certificate or final examination at the end of primary school.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

All pupils attend *collèges*, which form a single structure of education for pupils during the 4 years following primary school.

The four years are divided into two cycles of 2 years each, the observation cycle (first and second years) and the guidance cycle (third and fourth years).

Assessment

Throughout the *collège* years, the teachers assess the extent to which the pupil has attained the objectives laid down in the syllabi of the courses, in terms of knowledge and skills. Teachers assign marks for each course, accompanied by a comment on the pupil's work and progress. These marks are recorded in a report sent to the pupil's parents at the end of each term. At the end of the school year, the *conseil de classe* decides on the promotion of pupils on the basis of their work during the year. There are no re-sit examinations in September for pupils who have not been successful during the school year. The family can appeal against a recommendation of the *conseil de classe*.

A national certificate (*brevet national*) is awarded on the basis of the marks pupils receive during the final two years of *collège*, which are noted on a report card (*fiche scolaire*), and in a national examination which enables the pupil's competence at the end of the fourth year of *collège* to be assessed.

Pupils move up to the next level regardless of whether they pass or fail the *brevet national*.

Pupils begin their career guidance in lower secondary school. They are closely involved in individual schemes of training and preparation for social and working life which are drawn up with the assistance of parents, teachers and the health and guidance staff.

The guidance decision for each pupil is preceded by continuous observation. The choice of direction is essentially the responsibility of the pupil's family or the pupil. If their choice conflicts with the recommendation of the *conseil de classe*, there is a discussion before the decision is taken by the head teachers. The family can appeal this decision to a committee chaired by the *Académie* Inspector, director of the national education service at *Département* level.

At the end of the second year, the family has to choose between the general or the technological branch in third year[135]. In principle, this choice does not determine the pupil's subsequent direction or options in upper secondary education. The *conseil de classe* must approve the decision, but, if it refuses, the parents can appeal to a committee chaired by the *Académie* Inspector including among others head teachers, teachers, and parent representatives.

Pupils who are in difficulties can be placed in a smaller third year class offering special assistance and support teaching, taking the place of the pre-vocational class (*CPPN*). At the end of the third year of the *collège*, a pupil can also choose a fourth year class leading to the vocational branch. Since 1992, this class has been gradually replacing the pre-apprenticeship class (*CPA*).

At the end of the fourth year, the *conseil de classe* makes proposals for the educational guidance of every pupil towards one of the three branches offered by the *lycées* - the general, which leads to the General *Baccalauréat*; the technical, which leads to the Technical *Baccalauréat* and a national Technical Certificate; and the vocational, which leads to the Vocational Aptitude Certificate (*CAP*), the Vocational Studies Certificate (*BEP*) and the Vocational *Baccalauréat*

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Depending on the branch they have chosen, pupils go to a *lycée* offering general, technical or vocational education.

1. General or technical upper secondary education (three years)

The first year at the *lycée* (*seconde de détermination*) offers a common core curriculum followed by all pupils, supplemented by two optional courses and practical workshops. However, there are also certain classes in this year offering specialised courses which lead to specific certificates, such as the *Baccalauréat* in music (*Baccalauréat F11*) and certain technical certificates.

At the beginning of this year, all pupils must sit a national examination in French, mathematics, and modern languages. The purpose of this test is to allow teachers to adapt their teaching

135 Originally set up in the vocational *Lycée*, the pre-vocational branch in the third and fourth years has been transferred gradually to the *collèges* since 1990. The preparatory classes leading to a Vocational Aptitude Certificate (*CAP*) beginning in the second year are being phased out. From 1994, students will only be able to take the *CAP* at the end of the third year of *collège*.

methods to the particular needs of the pupils, most notably by organising work in small groups.

This year plays an important role in pupils' educational guidance. During the two final terms, pupils and their families indicate in writing and in order of preference the courses the pupils would choose to take in the following year. On the basis of these requests and of the pupils' marks, the *conseil de classe* makes a recommendation. If there is a disagreement, the family can appeal to the same kind of committee ultimately responsible for similar problems at the *collège* level.

The results of the continuous assessment of pupils throughout the year (marks and comments by the teachers) are communicated to the parents in a school report each term, a *carnet de notes*, and in correspondence, personal interviews and meetings. The *conseil de classe* decides whether or not a pupil should move up to the next class. There is no re-sit examination in September.

Upper secondary education leads to the national *Baccalauréat* examination, which entitles pupils to enter higher education. If pupils fail this examination, they can request a secondary school leaving certificate which does not lead to higher education. The *Baccalauréat* examinations test the material set out in the official curricula of the final classes at the *lycées*. A pupil who fails the examination has the right to sit it again the following year.

2. Upper secondary vocational education

Vocational education comprises two cycles - the determination cycle and the final cycle.

The determination cycle includes:

- classes leading, generally in two years, to the Vocational Aptitude Certificate (*CAP*), which gives access to employment as a skilled worker or employee;
- the upper vocational, and then the final *BEP* classes, leading in two years to the Vocational Studies Certificate (*BEP*);
- preparation for the *BEP*, which demands greater technical knowledge than the *CAP*, and which prepares pupils both for employment and for further study leading to a Vocational or Technical *Baccalauréat*.

The final cycle of the vocational branch, which is open to holders of a *CAP* or a *BEP*, consists of a 2-year preparation for a Vocational *Baccalauréat*. These courses offer advanced training for a specific career. There are 34 Vocational *Baccalauréats*.

Pupils in the vocational branch are subject to continuous assessment in much the same way as they were assessed in the general education course, i.e. with marks and comments. Periods of work experience in a firm are required in future for courses leading to a vocational certificate.

3. Upper secondary education in agriculture

Agricultural *lycées*, for which the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible, prepare pupils for certain Technical *Baccalauréats* and for the Agricultural Technician's Certificate.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

To enter university, pupils must hold:

- a *Baccalauréat*; or
- evidence that they have passed a special university entrance examination - *ESEU A* in the humanities or *ESEU B* in science; or
- a French or foreign certificate legally recognised as exempting the pupil from, or as the equivalent of, the *Baccalauréat*.

Applicants for non-university higher education who hold a *Baccalauréat* are selected by an admissions committee either on the basis of a competitive examination or on paper, after scrutiny of the candidate's application.

Pupils whose studies, work experience or personal achievements are recognised as acceptable may also be admitted to different levels of post-*Baccalauréat* education provided by universities, institutes or public "schools" which come under the Ministry of Education. Such recognition either gives them a right of direct entry to a course leading to a national or government-regulated qualification or entitles them to sit an institution's entrance examination. Holders of foreign certificates and diplomas, in particular, my request such recognition. The decision to grant it is taken by the president of the university or the director of the institution on the recommendation of an education committee.

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IRELAND

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

After primary school, pupils attend the Junior Cycle of secondary school. At present, there are two types of lower secondary school, which offer general and vocational education respectively.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

There is no national system of nursery schools in Ireland. However, National Schools may accept pupils on or after their fourth birthday and offer them a course integrated in primary education.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The Irish School Attendance Act of 1926 requires children to attend school between the ages of 6 and 15. The majority of children attend school from the age of five.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education lasts six years and is focused both on the development of the individual child's abilities and on the subjects taught. The curriculum allows a great deal of flexibility in teaching methods.

Recommendations or guidelines define the content of the curriculum and the objectives to be attained. The following six subjects are required of all pupils: English, Irish, mathematics, environmental studies (geography, history, etc.), religion and physical education.

Pupils are assigned to classes by age, and one teacher is responsible for the class. For practical reasons, one teacher may be responsible for several different age groups.

Assessment

Teachers assess their pupils' progress using both standardised tests prepared by the Teachers' Training College in Dublin or available on the specialised market, and oral and written examinations they prepare themselves. Teachers also base their assessment on direct observation of the pupils. Parents receive an annual report on their children's progress in the different areas of the course, based in part on the pupils' results in national examinations.

Pupils are promoted automatically from one class to the next and they cannot be required to repeat the year. Pupils who are having difficulty receive support teaching from specialist teachers, and a psychological service is available in primary schools.

There is neither an official examination nor a certificate at the end of primary school. Pupils are selected early for different types of education, at the end of primary school; the head teacher and the teacher offer the pupils preliminary counselling on their future direction on the basis of their school performance.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (Junior Cycle)

Several kinds of school are available for the final three years of compulsory education - secondary, vocational, comprehensive and community schools.

Comprehensive and community schools offer a broad general education. Only recently established, they are attended by only between 2% and 6% of all pupils. Sixty percent of the pupils attend secondary schools, while 30% attend vocational schools.

Initially conceived and organised for very different types of education, with vocational schools offering vocational training and secondary schools a more traditional, academic education, all schools now tend to offer a general curriculum combining both academic and vocational subjects. Many schools offer a wide range of options, but vocational schools remain oriented primarily towards technical and vocational subjects.

Certain schools require applicants to sit an entrance examination set by the school, but there is no selection for admission to comprehensive and community schools. Pupils are only required to take seven subjects in the Junior Cycle, of which two are elective.

Teachers are responsible for assessing the pupils. Each school defines its own methods. Pupils move up automatically from one class to the next.

Since 1992, pupils who complete the Junior Cycle are eligible to sit a national examination for the award of the Junior Certificate. This standardised system of assessment and certification was introduced on the recommendation of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)[136]. Examinations are offered at two levels of difficulty (higher and ordinary) to allow for differences in young people's abilities and aptitudes. This examination system will replace the previous dual system, which included the Day Vocational Certificate, awarded after two years of study, and the Intermediate Certificate, awarded after three years in Secondary School. The latter served as a school leaving certificate.

There are three levels of certification - Foundation, Ordinary and Higher - in Irish, mathematics and English.

The Junior Certificate is awarded on the basis of written examinations. An assessment of oral proficiency may also be included in modern language examinations, and there may be practical examinations in wood- and metalworking. Examination questions are prepared by Inspectors from the Department of Education, and the actual marking of examinations is done by teachers under the supervision of assisting advisory examiners, who in turn are directed by the Department's Inspectors.

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136 In 1987, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was made responsible for monitoring standards of performance in the public examinations and for advising the Department of Education on the curriculum at the primary and secondary levels and on appropriate methods and techniques of assessment.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

1. The Transition Year

Certain schools organise a transition year, consisting of an multi-disciplinary course for pupils who have completed the Junior Cycle and who wish to go on to the Senior Cycle.

2. Upper secondary education (Senior Cycle)

This two-year course leads to the Leaving Certificate examination, which gives access to higher education and is also used as a selection test for entry to certain kinds of employment. The examination is marked by examiners specially recruited for this purpose, under the supervision of assisting advisory examiners, and under the same conditions as the Junior Certificate examination.

There are also several two-year technical education and vocational training courses.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Places are limited in all fields of higher education except art. The institutions of higher education themselves determine their own entrance requirements, which are generally based on applicants' marks in the Leaving Certificate examination.

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ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

At the end of primary school, all pupils follow a common core syllabus in lower secondary school. Differentiated branches are only available in upper secondary level, after compulsory education is complete.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Nursery schools admit children between the ages of 3 and 5. Attendance is optional.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education begins at the age of 6 and continues to age 14.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education lasts for 5 years and is divided into two cycles. The first cycle, which lasts for 2 years, focuses on reading and writing skills. The second, which lasts for 3 years, introduces the pupil to more abstract ideas.

The educational aims and curricula of the primary school are defined at national level. The Teaching Staff Council (*collegio dei docenti*) organises the courses as a whole, and the teams of teachers responsible for classes at the same level deal with specific problems. These are called *consigli d'interclasse* (Inter-class Councils).

The new law on primary education has profoundly altered the responsibility for teaching the various subjects. One teacher no longer teaches all subjects. Instead, there are generally three teachers in each cycle who are shared by two classes. The first teacher is responsible for reading and language, the second for mathematics and sciences, and the third for environmental studies. A specialist teacher is also called on to teach foreign languages. The schools have considerable freedom to organise their own class timetables. The final decision is left to the *collegio dei docenti*, under the direction of the local director of education (*direttore didattico*), who assesses the possibilities for establishing "open" classes, on a modular basis, and rotating teachers.

Assessment

Pupils are observed and assessed by their teachers throughout the year. The results are set out in individual written reports called *schede*, which provide a complete profile of the pupil's personality. Pupils are promoted from one class to the next on the basis of their ability and motivation. If a teacher recommends that a pupil repeat a class, this must be defended in the Inter-class Council.

The schools administer an examination called the *licenza elementare* at the end of primary education. It includes two written tests and an oral one. The examination board is made up of the teachers

responsible for the class and two other teachers. Pupils who pass this examination receive a certificate of the same name, which entitles them to enter secondary school.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (*SCUOLA MEDIA*)

At this level, a common 3-year course is offered to all pupils.

The teachers carry out continuous assessment of the pupils. Marks and examinations were abolished in 1977, and the teachers now maintain a personal record for each pupil. It contains a description of the pupil's attitude, behaviour and level of achievement. The teachers also record the pupil's academic progress and maturity, as they are responsible for developing their pupils' ability to make choices.

Every three or four months, the teachers use these personal records to prepare an analytical assessment in relation to each subject and a general, informative evaluation of the pupil's overall attainment. These reports are sent to the parents along with explanatory comments. On the basis of this information, the class council (*consiglio di classe*) decides whether a pupil should be promoted from one class to the next. It is possible to repeat a class.

If the *consiglio di classe* judges a pupil's work during the year to be unsatisfactory in only a few subjects, he or she can be advised to take an examination in September in these subjects. Promotion to the next class will depend on passing this second examination.

At the end of the third year of the *scuola media*, pupils take the intermediate school leaving examination, which is essential for further study at the upper secondary level. Each school administers this examination autonomously. The teachers prepare and administer the examination and award an overall mark on a five-point scale (from "unsatisfactory" to "excellent"). The final decision to pass a pupil is made by the Teaching Staff Council (*collegio dei docenti*), chaired by an external head teacher (usually from the same province).

The qualitative assessment of the pupil's performance together with the final assessment are incorporated in an attestation of completion of compulsory education, which is attached to the pupil's personal record.

Pupils, who pass the intermediate school leaving examination, receive a *Diploma di Licenza Media*. Advice and suggestions regarding future education are appended to the certificate, and the educational guidance of the pupils is in fact an integral part of the teachers' role in the *scuola media*. But the pupils retain complete freedom of choice. Teachers only state their opinion, which may be rejected by the pupils and their families.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

To attend an upper secondary school, it is necessary to hold a school leaving certificate from lower secondary school, the *Diploma di Licenza Media*. This level of education is intended for young people between the ages of 14 and 19, who can choose from among several different streams:

1. Traditional Education

It comprises:

- the 5-year Classical *Liceo* (*liceo classico*), which prepares pupils for universities and institutions of higher education. It is divided into two cycles of 2 and 3 years respectively.
- the 5-year Scientific *Liceo* (*liceo scientifico*), which comprises an initial period of 2 years followed by one of 3 years, with no intermediate examination. It gives access to all forms of higher education.

- the Primary Teacher Training School (*istituto magistrale*) which trains teachers during 4 years with an optional 5th year.

- the 3-year Nursery Teacher Training School (*scuola magistrale*), which trains nursery school instructors.

2. Art Education

This is a 4-year course at the Artistic *Liceo* (*liceo artistico*). Subjects are divided into two sections (architecture, and representational and graphic arts). The architecture section provides access to the Faculty of Architecture; the other section leads to advanced courses at the Academy of Fine Arts. By following an additional 5th year, pupils can obtain the national upper secondary school leaving certificate in art (*maturità artistica*), which gives access to all university faculties.

Art Education is also provided in the art institutes (*istituti d'arte*). It offers a 3-year course leading to the applied arts certificate (*maturità di arte applicata*), which is equivalent to an upper secondary school leaving certificate and entitles pupils to proceed to higher education in schools of arts.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment in both traditional and art education. Pupils are promoted from one class to the next on the basis of the marks they have obtained in all subjects throughout the year and with the approval of the *consiglio di classe*. There is no examination at the end of the year.

The Teaching Staff Council in each school establishes examination periods (written examinations) during the year. The *consiglio di classe* assigns marks to the pupils, and opinions are registered concerning the academic achievement and progress of each pupil. All of these elements, which are noted in the class records, are taken into account in the final assessment.

3. Technical Education

Technical education comprises a 5-year course. Pupils are subject to the same kind of assessment as in the traditional and art branches. Pupils who receive an overall pass mark in their final year are admitted to sit the school leaving examination in their chosen specialisation. The Technical School Leaving Certificate provides access not only to employment but also to higher education.

4. Vocational Training

Vocational training involves a 3-year course, but it is possible to extend it by 2 years. Assessment procedures are the same as described above. The qualification examinations are administered by boards composed of teachers from the school and external experts from the relevant occupational sectors. Successful pupils receive a qualification certificate which entitles them to enter the fourth year of the 5-year experimental cycle, at the end of which, after an examination, a vocational training school leaving certificate is awarded. The qualification certificate entitles the holder to enter employment, but not higher education.

A Ministerial decree of 24 April 1992 provided for the reorganisation of the vocational training course as of the 1994/95 academic year into two cycles of 2 years and 1 year respectively. In the first cycle, all pupils will follow a common core syllabus, certain courses specific to their chosen area of study, and an advanced module. The third year will have a similar structure, but will have more course hours in the chosen subject area. These changes are based on an experimental course launched in 1988/89 called *Progetto 92*.

Certification

There is a state examination called the *Maturità* at the end of all these types of secondary school (*licei, istituti magistrali, istituti tecnici, istituti professionali*). Pupils who pass this examination receive an upper secondary school leaving certificate. Only pupils who have received pass marks in the final year of school are allowed to enter for this examination.

However, the law allows candidates aged 18, who hold a lower secondary school leaving certificate or *licenza media*, to sit the *Maturità* examination independently, as *privatisti*, i.e. without being enrolled at a school. Pupils aged 23 and older can sit the examination without any certificate.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

It is generally necessary to hold an upper secondary school leaving certificate (*diploma de maturità*) to be admitted to higher education. Other certificates obtained after a briefer period of education only give access to certain specific advanced courses. The *Maturità* examination gives access to all university faculties.

There is a *numerus clausus* in medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, and computer sciences. Pupils must sit an entrance examination set by the faculty in question. Marks in the *Maturità* examination count for 30%, while the marks in the entrance examination count for 70% of the overall assessment.

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LUXEMBOURG

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

At the end of primary school, pupils are allocated to the general and technical branches of secondary school. The latter is organised in cycles.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education lasts for 11 years and involves children from the age of 4 to 15. It includes 2 years of pre-school, 6 years of primary and 3 years of secondary education.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Since 1992, pre-school education is compulsory between the ages of 4 and 6. Most pre-school establishments are attached to primary schools, but offer a programme of activities suited to the ages of the children.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

There is a common core syllabus throughout primary school.

Pupils are generally assigned to a class by age and all basic subjects are taught by one teacher. There may be specialised teachers in subjects such as physical education, music, religion and artistic subjects. In most cases, pupils have a different teacher every year, but in certain communes, the same teacher remains with the same group/class for 2 or a maximum of 3 years.

Assessment

Pupils are assessed continuously by the teacher. From the first year, there are periodic tests (*devoirs scolaires*) in each subject, but they do not constitute formal examinations. Three times a year, the pupils receive a school report assessing their work during the term. Marks are given on a 60-point scale and anything under 30 is considered unsatisfactory.

On the basis of the pupils' oral participation in class and marks in written work throughout the year, the class teacher decides whether they should be promoted to the next class or should repeat the year. The pupil's parents can appeal against this decision to the Primary School Inspector.

At the end of the year, pupils receive a school report which indicates whether or not they have passed the year and may be admitted to the next class.

There is no examination at the end of primary education attesting that it has been completed successfully and pupils do not receive any certificate.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

At the end of primary school, pupils are directed on the basis of their abilities and interests towards supplementary classes, general or technical secondary school, or vocational training.

1. Supplementary classes

Pupils who are not considered suitable for transfer to the general or technical branches of secondary school after the six years of compulsory primary education are directed towards the *supplementary classes*, which prepare them for employment. They are taught general and practical subjects for 3 years and receive a certificate at the end of the course. The Ministry of Education is planning to merge these supplementary classes with the vocational training course at a future date.

2. General secondary education

Pupils must take an entrance examination administered at national level in order to be admitted to general secondary education. This includes examinations in French, German and mathematics. Pupils who pass this examination may enrol in a *lycée* offering traditional general education.

The first year of the 3-year lower cycle is an observation class during which all pupils follow a common curriculum. In the following year, pupils must choose between the classical branch (which includes Latin) and the modern branch (which includes English).

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment and teachers give regular tests. Pupils are promoted to the next class on the basis of their results throughout the year. It is possible to repeat a class. At the end of the school year, pupils receive a school report which indicates whether or not they have passed the year and may be admitted to the next class.

Pupils receive a school leaving certificate at the end of the cycle without taking a final examination. This certificate admits them to the upper cycle of general secondary education.

3. Technical secondary education

Technical secondary education is provided in Technical *Lycées*. It comprises three cycles - a cycle of observation and orientation, an intermediate cycle, and an upper cycle. It takes those pupils who have neither obtained admission to general secondary school nor been assigned to the supplementary classes. There is an entrance examination, set nationally, for admission to technical secondary education. This includes tests in French, German and mathematics.

The lower cycle, which lasts 3 years, is called the observation and guidance cycle. During the first year, pupils follow a common curriculum. In the second year, pupils must choose between the technical and vocational branches. The third year is organised in three sections - technical, comprehensive and vocational - which play an important role as regards pupils' further studies.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment throughout the 3-year course, but there are no examinations at the end of the year. If they fail at the end of the last year of this cycle, pupils can either repeat the year or transfer to certain vocational courses. Pupils who do not complete the lower cycle of technical secondary education can transfer to certain courses of mainly practical training.

Pupils who are successful in the technical branch can enter any type of intermediate course, more particularly in the technical section. Those from the comprehensive section can on certain conditions go on to either the technician's or the vocational branch; those from the vocational branch can only go on to the vocational branch in the intermediate cycle.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

This is a 4-year course, divided into two cycles of 2 years each:

- A comprehensive cycle, during which pupils must choose between the arts and sciences. The curriculum includes specific options preparatory to specialisation.

- A specialisation cycle, during which pupils must choose one of the specialised sections in the arts or sciences.

During the first 3 years of the upper cycle, pupils are promoted to the next class on the basis of continuous assessment by the teachers. At the end of each year, the teachers give a report which indicates whether they have passed the year or will have to repeat it. There is no examination at the end of the year.

At the end of the final year of general secondary education, there is a written national secondary school leaving examination covering the subjects studied in that year. Successful pupils receive a secondary school leaving certificate, which gives access to higher education.

TECHNICAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

This consists of two cycles:

- A 3-year intermediate cycle, divided into three sections (technical, vocational and technician training) in which pupils may follow either full-time technical courses or part-time vocational courses supplemented by an apprenticeship.

  Pupils are promoted to the next year on the basis of continuous assessment throughout the year. At the end of the school year, pupils receive a school report which indicates whether or not they have passed the year and may be admitted to the next class.

  This course leads to a national examination which entitles successful pupils to a certificate of technical and vocational proficiency (*CATP*). This certificate gives access to employment. A *CATP* received in the technical or technician's section of secondary school also gives access to upper secondary technical education.

- The full-time, two-year upper cycle leads to a technical upper secondary school leaving certificate, which gives access to higher education. It also leads to a technician's certificate, which gives access to employment and certain advanced training courses.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

A secondary school leaving certificate is required for admission to higher education. In Luxembourg, higher education is limited to:

- a first year of university studies in the arts and social sciences, sciences, medicine and pharmacy at the *Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg*;
- a post-graduate course, not leading to a degree, at the *Institut'Universitaire International de Luxembourg*;
- a 3-year course offered by the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie*;
- a 3-year course provided by the *Institut Supérieur d'Etudes et de Recherches Pédagogiques* and the *Institut d'Etudes Educatives et Sociales*;
- a 2-year course in computer science and management at the *Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg*.;
- a 2-year post-secondary course of study leading to the *brevet de technicien supérieur*.

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NETHERLANDS

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

When they have completed their primary education, in which a common curriculum is taught to all children, pupils move up to secondary school, where they are allocated to different branches of education - pre-university, general or vocational. The first year in each of these branches is a transition year during which, or at the end of which, pupils may in principle change branches.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

There is no separate pre-school education system. Primary schools, however, may accept children from the age of 4. Attendance remains optional until the age of 5. During that first year, children do not receive any formal teaching. Instead, a course of educational activities suited to their age is offered. Younger children can be admitted to playgroups run by private individuals or by certain local authorities.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 5 and lasts for 12 years - i.e. either 12 years of full-time compulsory education, or until the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of 16. In the latter case, the pupil must continue to attend school part-time for one more year.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Basic (primary) education lasts for 8 years, from ages 4 to 12. The first year remains optional and formal basic education begins at age 5.

Every 2 years, each school has to draw up a school plan describing the general organisation of teaching, the teaching methods, the activities proposed in each subject and the assessment procedures used. These school plans must be formulated within the framework of objectives defined at national level.

One teacher is responsible for all basic subjects during a school year. Specialised teachers can also teach certain subjects such as physical education. Schools have considerable freedom to decide whether or not to assign a different teacher to a class at the beginning of each school year.

Assessment

The teacher regularly assesses the pupils and prepares reports indicating their individual progress. Assessment is continuous and is based on the year's work. The decision whether or not pupils are promoted to the next class is made on the basis of their progress. By law, each school can determine for itself the way in which it assists its weakest pupils (groups streamed according to ability, individualised teaching, support teaching, or repeating the year). The teacher, in consultation with the school authorities, decides whether or not the pupil is promoted to the next class. Approximately 1-2% of primary school pupils repeat each year.

National examinations set by the *Instituut voor Toetsontwikkeling (CITO)* (National Institute for Education Measurement) are held during the eighth year. The objective is to assess the pupils' knowledge and their ability to succeed in the different branches of secondary education. These tests also assist the head teacher in advising families on their children's future education. The tests are not mandatory, but over 60% of primary schools use them.

There is neither a certificate nor a final examination at the end of primary school. All pupils receive a report on their academic progress, including educational guidance. Parents are not obliged to follow this.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are several types of secondary education at present - pre-university education (*VWO*), general secondary education (*HAVO* and *MAVO*) and vocational training (*BO*).

Pupils are admitted to a given branch of secondary education on the basis of a report by the head teacher of the primary school, and on the recommendation of an admissions committee formed by the competent authority of the secondary school or of the schools concerned (head teacher and two teachers from the secondary school, and in some cases the head teacher and the teacher of the pupil's class in the primary school). To be admitted to the *HAVO* and *VWO* education, pupils must pass the relevant aptitude tests. These are generally run by the *CITO* at the end of primary school.

A 1992 act on the reform of lower secondary education provides for the gradual introduction of a common core curriculum (*basisvorming*) beginning in the 1993/94 school year. It will consist of 15 compulsory subjects common to all types of secondary schooling.

The aim is to defer the choice of a particular course of study and to modernise the course curricula. Experts at national level will set minimum standards to be attained in each subject, and these will be revised every five years. Attainment tests will be prepared at national level, but it will be for the individual schools to decide whether pupils have actually reached the standard required.

The reform has already led to the abolition of the first cycle of vocational secondary education (*LBO*). It has been turned into a cycle of preparatory vocational training (*VBO*). This measure, which was implemented in 1992, only affects pupils going into the first year of this course and thus does not affect the normal pursuit of studies already begun in this branch of *LBO*.

1. Pre-university education (*VWO* - 12 to 18 years)

This 6-year course prepares pupils for university entrance and is provided in *Gymnasia* (where Latin and Greek are taught), in the *Atheneum*, and in the *Lyceum* (a combination of the other two types of schools). Each of these offers different sections, with a bias towards the sciences, mathematics, economics, the classics and modern languages.

2. General secondary education (*AVO*)

There are two cycles of general secondary education:

- a four-year lower cycle (*MAVO*) from age 12 to age 16. It leads to a school leaving certificate which gives access to the fourth year of upper general secondary education (*HAVO*) or to upper vocational secondary education (*MBO*);
- a five-year upper cycle (*HAVO*) from age 12 to age 17, which fulfils the compulsory education requirement. The *HAVO* certificate gives access to vocational higher education.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment and are promoted to the next class if they receive the mark of "satisfactory" in the majority of their subjects at the end of the school year. It is not possible to repeat the same year twice. If pupils continue to receive bad marks after repeating a year once, they must change course.

Final examinations are taken in these two types of education (*VWO* and *AVO*), including:

- oral and written internal examinations, set and marked by the school;
- a written national examination, set by an expert board at Ministry level. The final mark is the average of the marks received in the internal and the national examinations.

3. Vocational secondary education (*BO*)

Vocational secondary education provides both general and practical education. Placements constitute an important element of the latter.

The first cycle of preparatory vocational secondary education (*VBO*) lasts 4 years, of which two are devoted to general subjects and the remaining two to vocational and technical training. Since September 1992, this system is progressively replacing the first vocational education cycle (*LBO*).

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment and are promoted to the next class if they receive the mark of "satisfactory" in the majority of their subjects at the end of the school year. It is not possible to repeat the same year twice. Pupils continuing to receive bad marks, after repeating a year once, must change course.

At the end of the course, pupils sit an examination in six or seven general and vocational subjects. In certain courses, there is a national written examination set by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The final examination of the first cycle of the vocational education covers six or seven general and vocational subjects. The relative difficulty of these courses ranges from "A" to "D". A "C" or a "D" level course usually includes both a test by the school and a national examination set by the Ministry of Education and Science. "A" and "B" level courses only require an examination set by the school.

Pupils who pass the final examination as a whole receive a national diploma, while pupils who only pass one or more individual parts receive a certificate.

Pupils who receive a diploma for the first cycle of vocational education (*LBO*) can either proceed to the second cycle (*MBO*) or seek apprenticeship training. For the former, they must have passed the final examination at "C" level in at least three subjects in the full-time first cycle.

The second cycle of vocational secondary education (*MBO*) is marked by greater cooperation with firms. This 2- to 4-year course is open to pupils who hold a relevant lower vocational secondary school leaving certificate or a lower general secondary school (*MAVO*) leaving certificate in the required subjects.

School leaving examinations are essentially the responsibility of the individual schools, which draw up the syllabus on the minimum basis of the national requirements, in relation to the attainment targets at the end of the course, and modify it in the light of the certification units

being aimed at. When there is a central final examination, however, the programme is set by the Ministry of Education and Science.

II. PART-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The aim is to ensure that young people stay in education for as long as possible or that they acquire apprenticeship training.

A short full-time and part-time vocational training is offered:

- unconditionally to all 16-year-olds;
- to 15-year-olds who have completed 3 years of lower secondary school;
- to young peopl, who have completed 11 years of full-time education.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The universities are open to pupils who hold the pre-university school leaving certificate (*VWO*) or who have passed a qualifying examination in the course of upper vocational training (*HBO*). In certain cases, applicants who do not hold the required certificates, but who are 21 years old, can gain admission if they pass an entrance interview.

Non-university higher education is open to pupils who hold an upper general secondary school leaving certificate (*HAVO*), a pre-university secondary school leaving certificate (*VWO*), or an upper vocational secondary school leaving certificate. Those who do not hold these certificates can apply for an entrance interview.

* * *

PORTUGAL

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

Compulsory education consists of the period of basic education (*Ensino Basico*). It is organised in three multi-annual cycles offering a common education to all pupils. Post-compulsory secondary education which follows is organised in two separate courses: the first provides transitional education leading to higher education, while the second is a preparation for employment.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Since 1975, pre-school education has been considered an integral part of the education system and specific objectives have been set out in a curriculum. Pre-school education is optional and is provided in nursery schools (*Jardins de Infância*) which take children between the ages of 3 and 6.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

There are 9 years of compulsory education, beginning at age 6 and ending at age 15 when basic education is completed.

BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education comprises three separate cycles, each building on the one before it.

- The first cycle of basic education lasts 4 years and is aimed at the 6 to 9-10 year old age group. Throughout this whole cycle, one teacher is in charge of the class and is responsible for teaching all the basic subjects, although another teacher can assist with certain activities. Generally, classes are established by age group; however, for practical reasons, a class may include pupils of different ages.

- The second cycle of basic education lasts 2 years and admits all pupils who have completed the first cycle. The education is divided into multidisciplinary areas. Each subject is taught by a specialist.

- The third cycle of basic education has become compulsory for pupils who enrolled in the first year of primary education in or after the 1987/88 school year. It comprises three years (the seventh, eighth and ninth years of schooling) and is intended for 12 to 15 year old pupils. Each subject is taught by a specialist and there is a variety of optional subjects.

Assessment

The assessment of pupils in basic education is formative and summative.

The formative assessment, which is descriptive and qualitative in nature, is based on comprehensive information in relation to each area of learning and is intended to inform pupils, the person responsible for their studies, teachers and others concerned, about the learning process and the attainment of the objectives of the course.

A summative assessment is usually made at the end of each term and at the end of each cycle, but cannot be made before the end of the second year at school.

In the first cycle, the assessment is descriptive and is carried out by the class teacher. In the second and third cycles, it is expressed on an ascending five-point scale and is accompanied by a summary of the descriptive comments entered in the school record during the course of the continuous formative assessment.

At the end of each cycle, the summative assessment is based on the pupil's overall development in terms of the general objectives of the course and this determines whether the pupil is promoted or held back. Pupils are only held back as an exceptional measure and only after special support has been arranged for the pupil.

These two assessments are prepared in meetings of the School Council (first cycle) or of the *conseil de classe* (second and third cycles) at the end of each term.

The administrative body of the school awards a certificate of basic education, without any final examination, to pupils who receive the mark "passed" at the end of the final summative assessment of the third cycle.

I. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Non-compulsory secondary education lasts 3 years and is organised into two branches. The *CSPOPE* is directed towards general education and the *CT* offers technical courses directed towards employment. Pupils are guaranteed the right to transfer from one branch to the other.

Secondary education is multi-disciplinary. In principle, each teacher is responsible for only one subject.

Secondary education is divided into four sections according to the subjects they include - natural sciences, arts, economics and social sciences, and the humanities.

Each of these sections, regardless of whether it is directed towards further education or employment, includes the following three elements:

- a common general education complying with national recommendations, which do not give schools or pupils any scope for choice;
- a specialised education in two or three subjects. These define the different educational profiles within the same section of one branch or the other. More particularly, those pupils who intend to remain in education have the opportunity to pursue options up to the limit of their timetable hours;
- a technical education including a choice of one or two of the subjects offered by each school in the *CSPOPE*. In the *CT*, this element includes a group of subjects closely linked to those in the specialised curriculum, the aim being to acquire a qualification specific to each course.

Assessment

The current reforms have not yet altered the way in which pupils are assessed at the secondary level. The *conseil de classe* assesses the pupils individually at the end of each term and assigns marks on a 20-point scale. This mark is based on the recommendations of the pupil's teacher in each subject, but must be confirmed by the *conseil de classe*. To pass the year, a pupil must receive an overall mark of at least 10 out of 20.

Pupils who attain pass marks at the end of upper secondary school are awarded a certificate indicating the type of education received. In the case of courses oriented towards employment, pupils also receive the qualifications they have earned in vocational training.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Decree 189 of 3 September 1992 reforms the requirements for admission to higher education. In the new system, pupils must sit an entrance examination set by the relevant institutions of higher education.

In addition to the results of specific examinations testing the pupil's aptitude for the course of higher education chosen, this assessment takes into account the marks the pupil received at the end of each year in secondary school and in a national examination for applicants to higher education.

Only candidates for higher education may sit the national examination, which is taken after completion of secondary education and has no influence on the award of the secondary school leaving certificate.

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UNITED KINGDOM
ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

At the end of primary school in England and Wales, most pupils (90%) follow a common syllabus in lower secondary school. Specialisation is introduced at the post-compulsory level. Pupils in Northern Ireland, on the other hand, obtain entry to different schools according to their results in a national selection test.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

There is no national pre-school system; local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales may organise pre-school education for 3 to 5-year-old children if they wish. In addition, nurseries under the supervision of the Department of Health may accept children below the age of two.

In Northern Ireland, the five Education and Library Boards, in conjunction with the Department of Education for Northern Ireland, aim to develop school attendance among children aged 2 to 5 in areas where social conditions are not conducive to success at school.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

In England and Wales, education is compulsory from age 5 to 16.

Compulsory education in Northern Ireland begins at age 4 and ends at age 16. The Education Reform Order of 1989 substituted a school leaving date for the school leaving age, so that all pupils receive a full 12 years of education.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

In England and Wales, primary education is for pupils aged 5 to 11.

In Northern Ireland, primary education is for pupils aged 4 to 11.

There are six classes in primary school. The first two years (children aged 5 to 7) currently constitute Key Stage 1; the remaining four years (children aged 8 to 11) constitute Key Stage 2.

Primary school classes are organised by age. For practical reasons, however, a class may include children of different ages. As a general rule, one teacher, if necessary with the assistance of other teachers, is responsible for teaching all subjects for one or more years in small schools. In some schools, there are also specialist teachers for physical education and music, and, very rarely, for languages.

Assessment

In principle, pupils are promoted automatically to the next class in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

At Key Stage 2, it is possible to teach the principal subjects in classes divided into groups according to learning ability.

There is normative assessment of pupils' progress in writing, reading and mathematics, and their verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills. The teacher provides an assessment of their progress, their attitude towards work, and their main interests.

The National Curriculum introduced by the education reform in England and Wales in 1988 and in Northern Ireland in 1989 sets the standards to be met by pupils at the end of each Key Stage[137]. The pupils' attainments must be assessed at the end of these Key Stages using national tests in conjunction with tests administered by the individual schools and the teacher's own assessment.

The schools are required to send parents an annual report on their child's progress in each subject and school activity (1990 Regulations). In addition, most schools keep a record of achievement (ROA), in which all aspects of the pupil's school activities (academic and non-academic) are reported. Central to the ROA is a personal report written by the pupils themselves, which helps them to think about their own progress.

There are no final examinations or certificates at the end of primary education.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

The National Curriculum introduced by the education reform of 1988 in England and Wales requires three core subjects (English, mathematics and science[138]) and seven other foundation subjects (technology and design, history, geography, music, art, physical education and, for pupils aged 11 to 16, a foreign language[139]). As in primary school, the National Curriculum also sets attainments targets for pupils at the end of the third and fourth Key Stages, i.e. at ages 14 and 16 respectively. National tests are used to measure the pupils' achievements at the end of these main Key Stages.

In England and Wales, the vast majority of pupils attend comprehensive schools from the age of 11. These offer pupils a comprehensive common curriculum without reference to ability or aptitude. In 1992, almost 90% of all pupils attended comprehensive schools. A small number of pupils attended other kinds of secondary schools:

- grammar schools, which admit pupils aged 11 to 18 or 19, selected by examination, and concentrate mainly on preparing them for higher education. They go beyond the minimum required by the National Curriculum. Approximately 3.4% of all pupils attended this kind of school in 1990.

- secondary modern schools, for pupils who have failed or not taken the entrance examination. Approximately 3.8% of pupils attended this kind of school in 1990.

- City Technology Colleges (CTC), created in 1988, where in addition to the National Curriculum there is an emphasis on science and technology; and City Technology Colleges of the Arts (CTCA), which specialise in the applied arts. There were 15 of these schools in 1992.

The National Curriculum is taught to all pupils, regardless of the kind of school attended.

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137 The Key Stages in primary school are from age 5 to 7 and 7 to 11 in England and Wales, and from age 4 to 8 and 8 to 11 in Northern Ireland.

138 And the Welsh language in Welsh-speaking schools in Wales.

139 And Welsh in the English-speaking schools in Wales.

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In Northern Ireland, there is a national competitive examination to help the grammar schools to decide on the allocation of their places. About 35% of pupils transfer to grammar schools at age 11/12. Admission is based on the rank order of the results in a national examination, more particularly in verbal reasoning tests. Pupils who do not obtain a grammar school place are sent, along with approximately 70% of their age group, to the secondary or intermediate schools.

The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order of 1989 makes provision for a common curriculum in all state-supported schools. In addition to religion, there are five[140] compulsory subjects (English, mathematics, science and technology, the environment and society, and creative and expressive studies). Courses in foreign languages are compulsory at secondary level.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment by the schools themselves. In principle, pupils are promoted automatically to the next class and can only be required to repeat a year under exceptional circumstances (such as a protracted absence due to illness) and with their parents' agreement.

At the end of lower secondary school (age 16), there is a public examination open in principle to all pupils regardless of the kind of school they have attended. The examination is administered by one of the five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Examination Boards (which are generally attached to a university). Successful candidates receive a GCSE certificate. The GCSE is a group of examinations each dealing with a single subject. Pupils can sit examinations in as many subjects as they wish. For a subject to be included on the certificate, the pupil must receive a minimum mark. The certificate indicates the standard attained by the pupil in each subject passed.

The GCSE Examination Boards' marking systems are standardised. Success in the GCSE examinations is not officially required for access to upper secondary education, but it allows pupils to evaluate their aptitude for higher education. Comparable examinations are held in Northern Ireland.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

When they have finished lower secondary education at around age 16, pupils have a number of options open to them. They many continue their studies in their secondary school or, depending on the system operating in the area where they live, they may enrol in a sixth form college, a tertiary college (these two options are not available in Northern Ireland), or in a college of further education. These three kinds of school offer both general and vocational courses.

- General education courses normally prepare the pupil for admission to higher education and for the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level, the main national public examination.

Since 1988, a new examination - the General Certificate of Education Advanced Supplementary Examination - extends the range of subjects available for pupils preparing for the GCE A Level examinations, which are generally taken in only three or four subjects. As at the lower secondary level, these national examinations are administered by the five GCE Examination Boards.

- Vocational courses offer an opportunity to choose from a range of occupations in an vocation-based learning programme. Since 1986, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) has been responsible for supervising and certifying qualifications awarded by examining bodies, most notably the City and Guilds of London Institute (CG), the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC), and the Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board (RSA).

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140 Irish must also be taught in Irish-language primary schools.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities and other institutions of higher education enjoy considerable autonomy in setting their admissions requirements.

Pupils who wish to enrol in a first degree course at a university in the United Kingdom send an application to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) along with their curriculum vitae and a list of the eight institutions of higher education to which they wish to apply. The applications are then forwarded to the institutions indicated, which make their selection. The UCAS was established by the universities and polytechnics to coordinate the application and admissions process in all the institutions throughout the United Kingdom. Pupils are selected on the basis of their marks in the examinations at the end of secondary school, but interviews and entrance examinations are sometimes also required.

In principle, it is the institutions themselves that decide how many pupils they wish to admit, but the Department for Education (or the Department of Education for Northern Ireland) decides how many pupils can be admitted each year to teacher training and more particularly to specialised secondary school teacher training (Postgraduate Certificate in Education).

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UNITED KINGDOM
SCOTLAND

ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION

Education and pre-school provision in Scotland are organised in much the same way as in England and Wales. Primary education lasts for 7 years there instead of 6, and all pupils attend comprehensive schools at the lower secondary level. They have a choice of specialised branches at the post-compulsory stage.

There is a national evaluation of all curricula every three years. This information is used as a basis for monitoring the education system and makes it possible to measure the attainment of 8, 12 and 14-year-old pupils in English, mathematics and science.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The situation in relation to nursery education is much the same as in England and Wales.

I. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Education is compulsory for 11 years, from age 5 to 16.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

In Scotland, children attend primary education between the ages of 5 and 12. The curriculum is not imposed by any central authority. Schools are free to organise their own curriculum. However, a reform is planned that will provide guidelines on assessment and school reports.

Currently, one teacher is responsible for teaching all subjects to a class, sometimes assisted by a specialist in learning support work, and specialist teachers may teach specific subjects. Especially in towns, children are generally assigned to a class according to their age. For practical reasons, teachers may sometimes be responsible for classes including pupils of different ages. The teacher usually only remains with the same class for one year.

Assessment

Pupils are assessed by the teacher according to the internal procedures of each school. Pupils are promoted automatically to the next class, and repeating the year is not permitted.

A national scheme of standardised tests was established in 1991 to assess the individual progress of each pupil in English and mathematics at ages 8 and 12. Schools cannot require pupils to take this test; it is optional and parental consent is required.

There is no certificate or final examination at the end of primary education.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Lower secondary education is provided for children between the ages of 12 and 16, i.e. until the end of compulsory education. It is provided in comprehensive schools, which offer a common curriculum with a wide range of subjects to all pupils, without reference to ability or aptitude. This is divided into two cycles of 2 years each and is the responsibility of the school authorities and the head teachers, who are expected to follow the guidelines introduced by the 1988 reform.

The first 2 years constitute an observation period, during which, in addition to the core curriculum, pupils can choose from several elective courses, which makes it possible to assess the pupils' abilities and interests. At the same time, the teachers observe the pupils' progress. At the end of the second year, the teachers advise the pupils of their choice of options. The goal at this stage is to provide a balanced curriculum. A certain number of multi-disciplinary courses, together with short courses and modular technical courses have been introduced.

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment according to the internal procedures of each school and are promoted automatically to the next class. Courses in certain subjects can lead, depending on the pupils' results, to external public examinations for the Standard Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education. Pupils usually sit these examinations at about age 16.

The certificate awarded at the end of this course takes into account the pupils' results in examinations and the school's assessment of their school work. It is awarded at three levels - "credit", "general" and "basic".
It is not necessary to receive this certificate in order to proceed to upper secondary school.

II. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Upper secondary education offers a course of general education which prepares pupils for admission to higher education. During the 2 years of post-compulsory secondary education, pupils can select from a wide range of subjects. The core of the curriculum is made up of courses leading to the Scottish Certificate of Education Higher Grade, which gives access to higher education. Pupils usually sit this examination at about age 17. A Certificate of Sixth Year Studies can be taken in a maximum of three subjects by pupils who have obtained excellent marks in the subjects concerned.

Colleges of Further Education also offer vocational training which includes a range of basic courses (from age 16) and advanced courses (from about age 17).

In recent years, the government instituted the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) to promote technical training and to formulate recommendations for further activity. In this context, modular technical and vocational courses have been provided in schools alongside the traditional secondary curriculum to pupils aged 14 to 18.

III. ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The requirements are similar to those in England and Wales. Pupils must hold a Scottish Certificate of Education Higher Grade and submit an application to the United Kingdom central clearing house (UCAS), which coordinates applications. Places are offered by the institutions on the basis of pupils' preferences and of their marks at the end of secondary school.

ANNEX 1

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

of 14 December 1989

on measures to combat failure at school

(90/C 27/01)

THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

Convinced that the raising of the general level of education is one of the principal preconditions for economic, social and cultural development and for the true operation of a democracy, and that proper education should enable every individual to achieve independence, become a good citizen and find a place in society and in the world of work;

Noting that failure at school is still affecting too many pupils in Europe, particularly children from socially and culturally under-privileged groups; that this is a serious problem both for the individual and collectively; that is leads to an individual failure in psychological and social terms and results in a high economic cost for Member States and for the Community;

Convinced of the need for reinforcement of the means employed to combat failure at school, by aiming for the best possible development of each child's capabilities;

Aware that the development of the multicultural dimension in education systems would allow failure at school to be combated more effectively;

Taking account of:

- the resolution of 9 February 1976 comprising an action programme in the field of education and more particularly the section concerning the achievement of equal opportunity for free access to all forms of education,
- the conclusions of the Council and of the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, of 14 May 1987 on failure at school and the fight against illiteracy,
- the results of the pilot projects conducted as part of the programmes on young people's transition from education to working life,

Noting:

- the Commission communication on Education and Training in the European Community - Medium-Term Guidelines (1989 to 1992),
- the study made at the request of the Commission on success and failure at school in Europe, highlighting the links between social and cultural background and educational success as well as the multi-dimensional aspect of action to be taken to reduce failure at school,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS RESOLUTION:

1. The Member States, in the framework of their educational policies and constitutional structures, will make every effort to combat failure at school intensively and to develop their action in one or other of the following directions:

1.1. gaining greater knowledge of the phenomenon and of its causes, whether or not these are related to the educational system;

1.2. diversifying the strategies and methods proposed;

1.3. strengthening of pre-primary education, which contributes to a better subsequent performance at school, particularly in the case of children from disadvantaged backgrounds;

1.4. adapting the working of school systems, in particular by:

- renewing content, back-up and methods of teaching and assessment,
- implementing differentiated education,
- improvement and diversification of timetabling,

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- reducing structural or functional breakdowns, by:

  - decompartmentalization and inter-disciplinary teaching,

  - educational continuity from one class to another and from one cycle to another,

  - better guidance of pupils depending on their wishes and aptitudes,

  - organization of "bridges" between different courses,

- introduction of possibilities of individual assistance (support, tutoring),

- diversification of forms of excellence, of equivalent level, at the end of compulsory schooling or at the end of the secondary cycle and of paths leading to the corresponding certificates,

- staff working in teams,

- better initial and continuing training of staff, as well as general support in their task as teachers,

- improving the administration of schools,

- development of teaching of the languages and cultures of children of Community and foreign origin;

1.5. increasing

- the attention paid by schools to the cultural, social and economic context,

- the receptiveness of schools to their environments,

- the points of contact with society and working life;

1.6. arranging for curricular and extra-curricular activities to complement each other, taking particularly into account factors influencing school results (health, family, sports, leisure activities);

1.7. selectively increasing educational resources (curricular and extra-curricular) aimed at the least-favoured sections of the public by means of:

- better qualified staff,

- greater material resources;

1.8. mobilizing education managers and all those with responsibility at local level in a collective effort;

1.9. circulating information on methods of action and practical achievements;

1.10. initiating or intensifying specific training of those concerned, whether or not they belong within the education system.

2. The Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, hereby take note that the Commission will:

- give wide circulation to the study on success and failure at school in Europe once its final form has been decided on,

- submit as soon as possible the complete report on failure at school in the Community requested by the Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, in their conclusions of 14 May 1987,

- give all necessary assistance and play its full part as a catalyst in cooperation.

The Commission's proposals in this respect will be examined by the Education Committee.

In this connection, so as to contribute to Member States' action on the question of failure at school, measures could be envisaged at Community level in the following areas:

- Organization of exchanges of information between Member States on current policies and practices,

  - those responsible for education should be more familiar with the policies applied in the Member States. They could usefully, at colloquia and working meetings, compare experiments conducted in the 12 Member States with a view to benefiting from them at the individual national level,

  - teachers, researchers and others concerned might also take part in field-study visits to gain knowledge of innovative methods used in the various countries;

- Conducting of detailed studies by experts:

  - case studies concerning situations representative of the typical trends of educational policies of the Member States,

  - thematic studies across the Member States.

ANNEX 2

TREATY OF MAASTRICHT

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND YOUTH

Article 126

1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

2. Community action shall be aimed at:

   - developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;

   - encouraging mobility of students and teachers, *inter alia* by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;

   - promoting cooperation between educational establishments;

   - developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States;

   - encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors;

   - encouraging the development of distance education.

3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the field of education, in particular the Council of Europe.

4. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council:

   - acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States;

   - acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

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ARTICLE 127

1. The Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training.

2. Community action shall aim to:

   - facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining;

   - improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market;

   - facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people;

   - stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms;

   - develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.

3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of vocational training.

4. The Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189c and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

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EURYDICE

The Education Information Network in the European Community

Educational cooperation in the Community

The education systems in the twelve EC Member States vary considerably and this variety, which is the result of historical and cultural factors, is itself a valuable asset.
In order to ensure that this diversity does not become an obstacle to the free movement of people, it is essential to provide effective information on the operation and structures of the education systems.

It is also vital for each Member State to be able to draw on the experience of its Community partners and thus contribute to the development of European educational cooperation.

In February 1976, the Council of the European Communities and the Ministers of Education adopted an action programme in the field of education (1) and agreed amongst other things to set up an information network. This information network, known as EURYDICE, is designed therefore to underpin educational cooperation within the European Community.

It was recognised in 1990 as the chief instrument for providing information on national and Community structures, systems and developments in the field of education (2).

Each Member State has, in accordance with its own distinctive education structures, designated at least one Unit to participate in the network and the Commission of the European Communities has set up the EURYDICE European Unit. The functioning of EURYDICE is based on cooperation among all the Units. In addition, the European Unit coordinates and stimulates the network.

(1) Official Journal C 38, 19.2.1976, p.1.

(2) Official Journal C 329, 31.12.1990, p.23.

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